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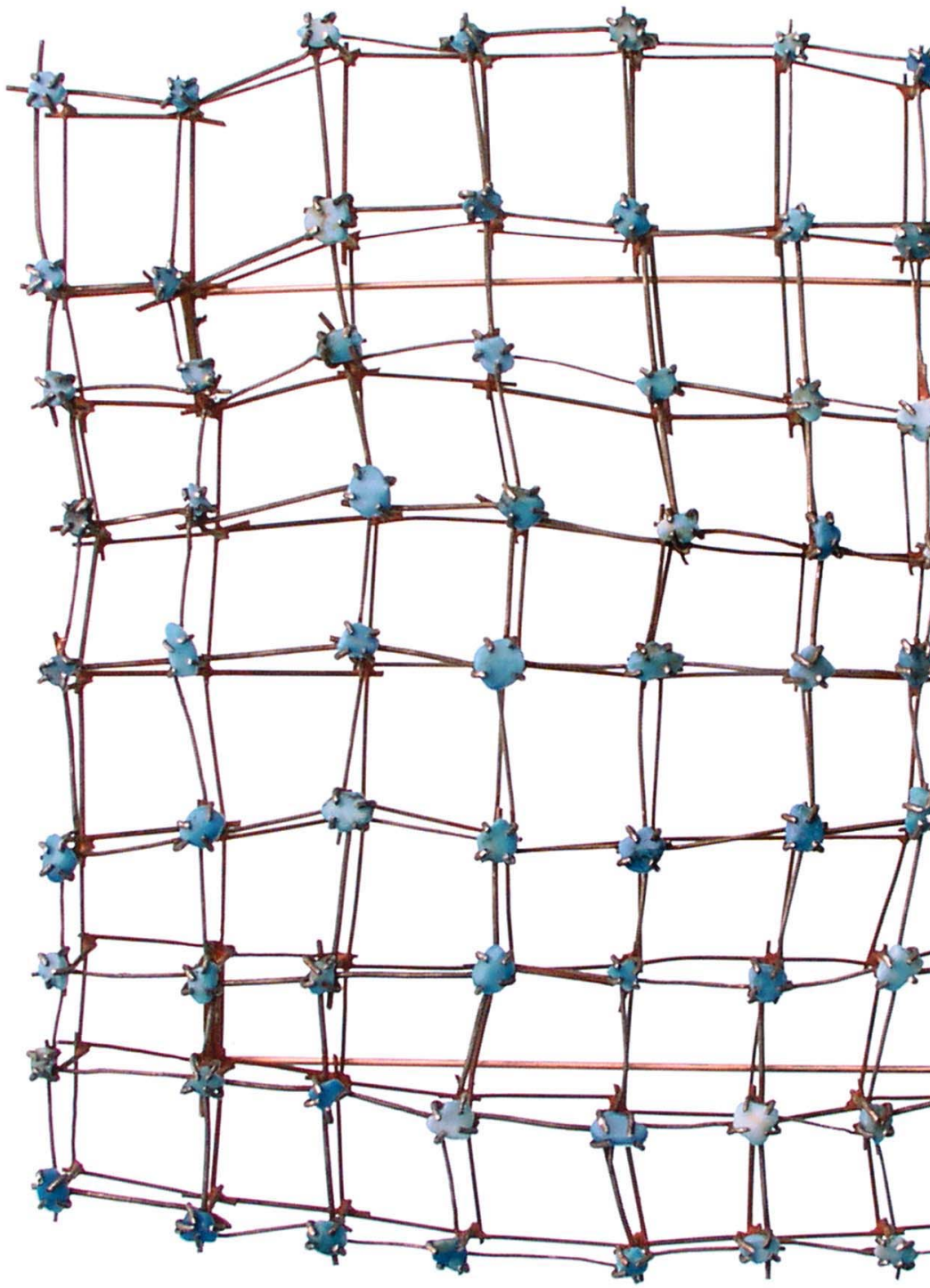
35 YEARS

Jewelry Goes to War

Balancing Act in Metal

The Beads of Beatrice Wood

Tender Morbidity



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Gabriel A. Maher, *DE___SIGN* (video), 2014
Photo courtesy of the artist

metalsmith

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Courtesy of Deedie Rose
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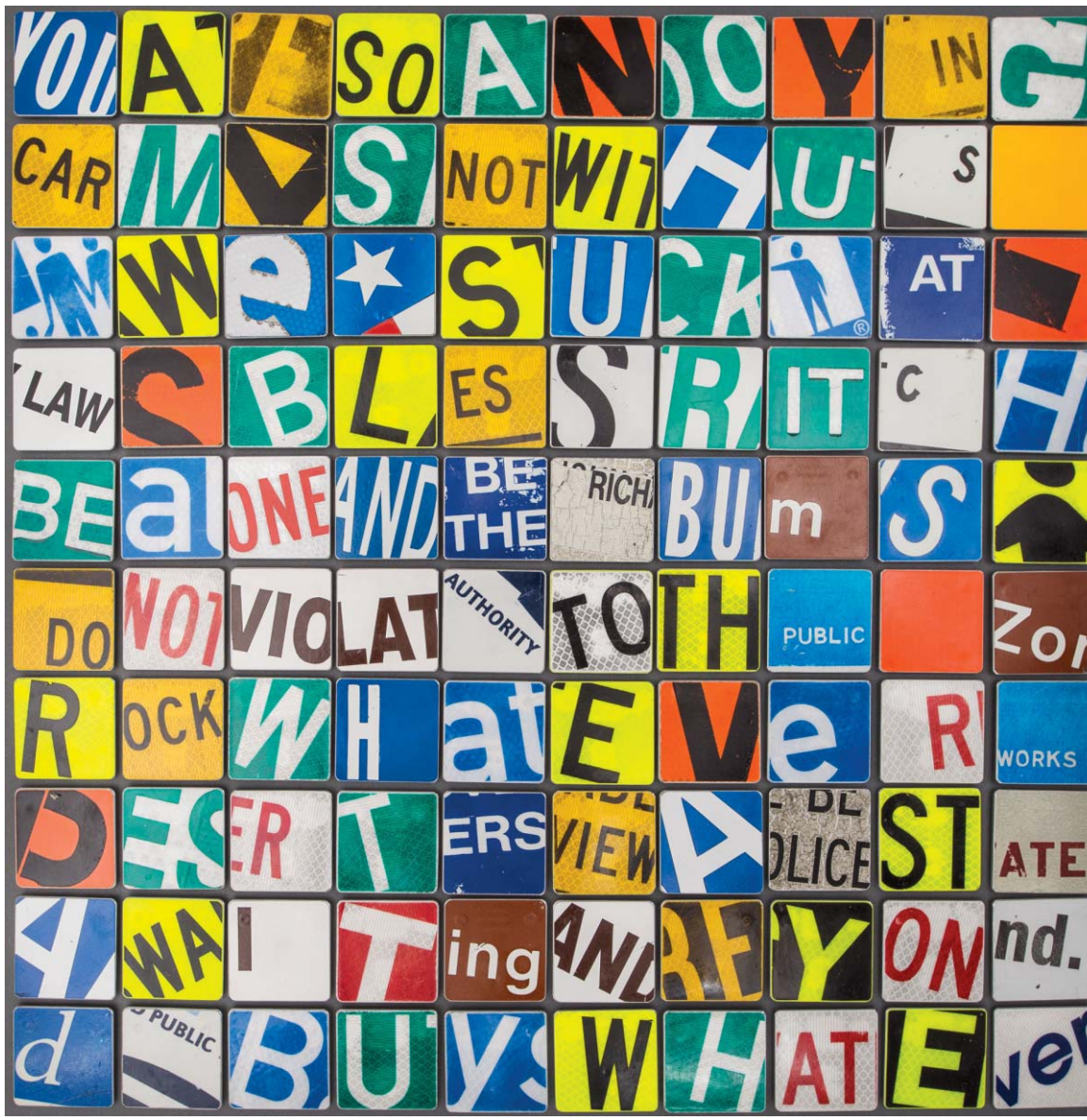
Photo by Steve Mason



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WHILE DIFFICULT TO QUANTIFY, emotions and feelings drive much of our lives, and certainly fuel our connection to jewelry. This issue of *Metalsmith* provides a wealth of fresh evidence of the emotive force of jewelry and other functional objects.

Collector and Rotasa Foundation trustee Susan Cummins speaks of her fascination with what makes jewelry "so powerful to humans from a deep psychological place" and the "feelings we attach to these small but powerful objects." Cummins's collection, profiled here, contains many such "power objects," whose potency derives from the emotions they arouse.

Much of jewelry's affective pull is rooted in sexual desire. For artist Beatrice Wood, who both made and wore jewelry, ornament was part of her seductive arsenal. She also understood its ability to enliven and uplift the spirit. "When one has nothing," wrote Wood, "is the time one must have something of beauty for the soul."

In his essay on David Clarke's metalwork, Garth Clark reorients our understanding of the artist within a context of "emotional depth" and tenderness. Although Clarke is commonly viewed as a rough rabble-rouser, the author argues that he "is not a vandal let loose in a silversmith's workshop, but an artist of deep poignancy."

There is perhaps no arena in which emotions run higher than war. Life and death are locked in struggle; each moment seems precious and every item assumes talismanic value. The sentiment and emotion invested in jewelry during World War I are conveyed in our feature "Jewelry Goes to War." This article adds moving testimony to how subjective feelings become crystallized in objects.

SUZANNE RAMLJAK
EDITOR

The mission of *Metalsmith* magazine is to document, analyze, and promote excellence in jewelry and metalsmithing. In fulfillment of the goal of producing a significant document of the field, editorial content will emphasize contemporary activities and ideas, with supportive content to include relevant historical work and critical issues.

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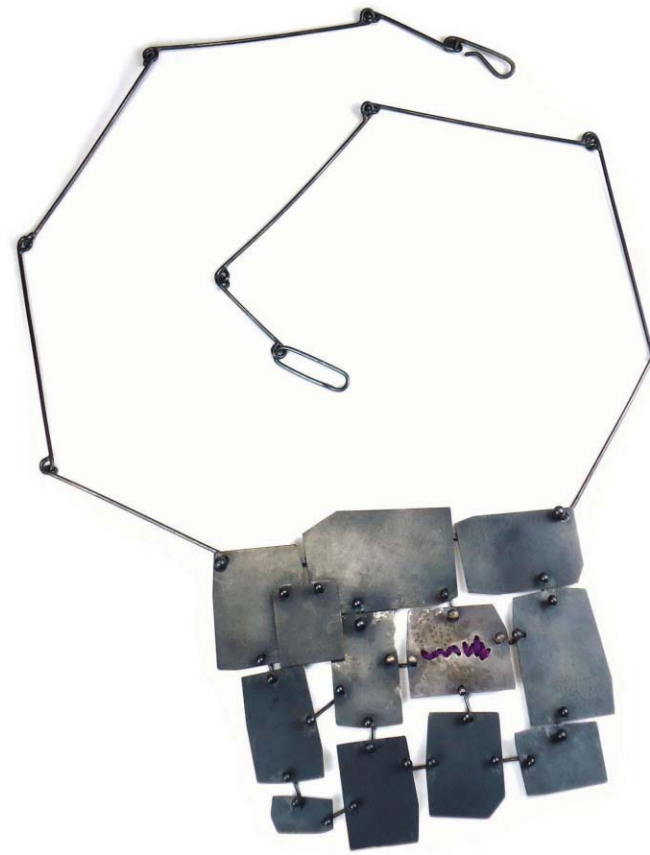

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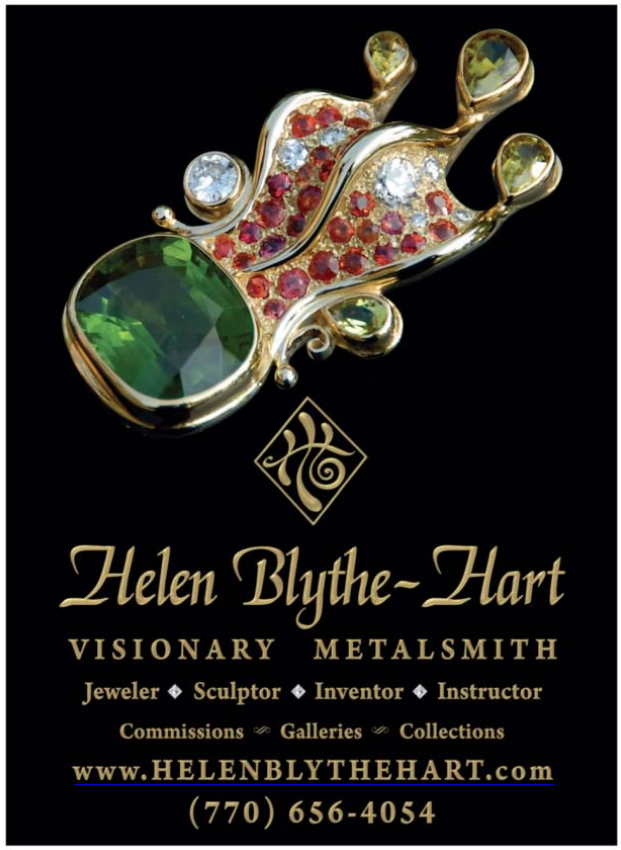

Sara Gallo Jewelry

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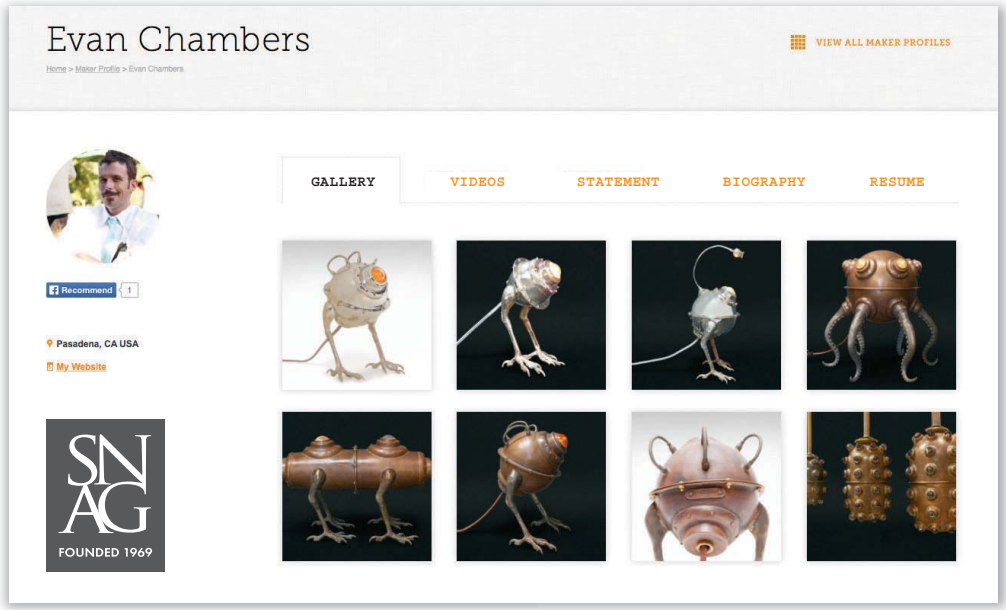

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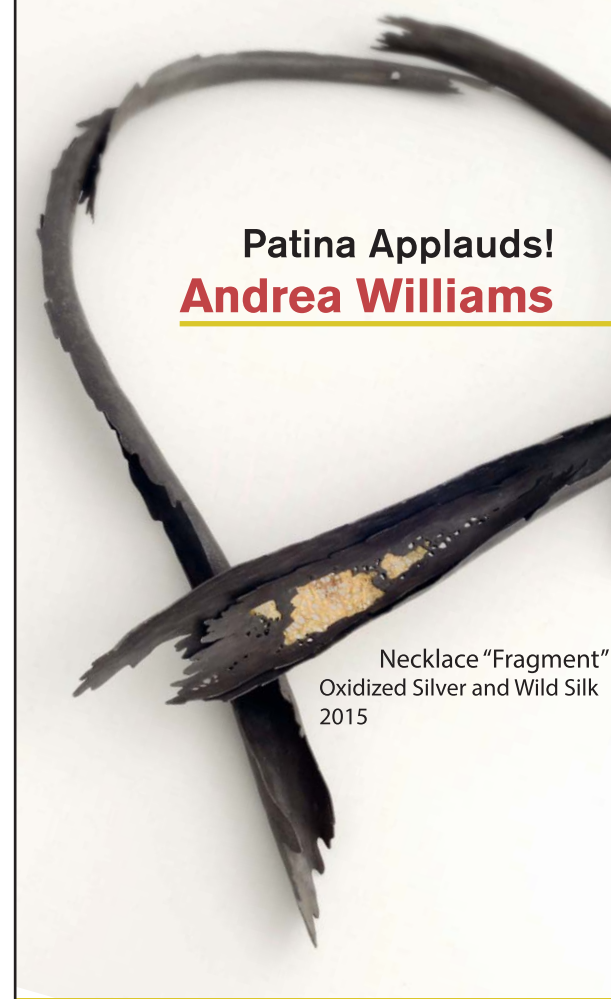

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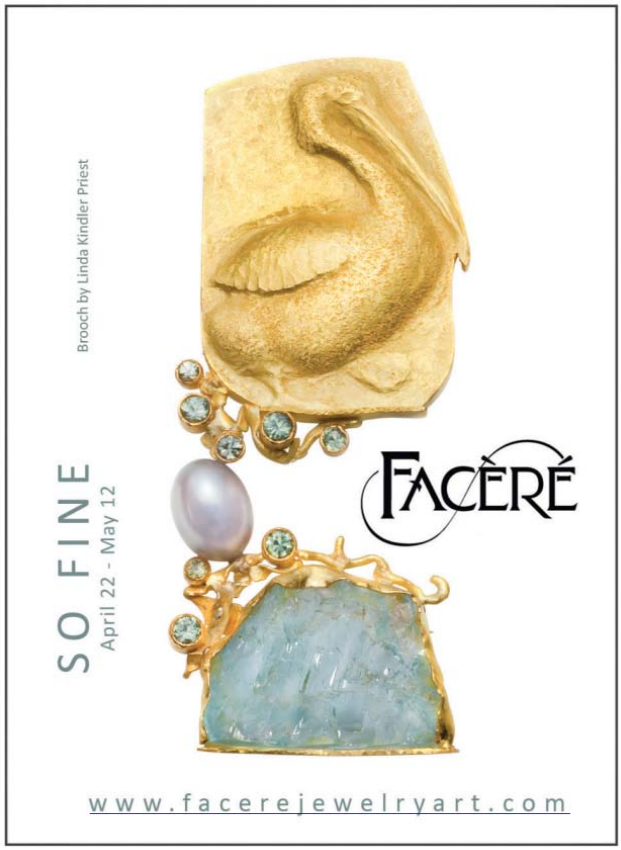

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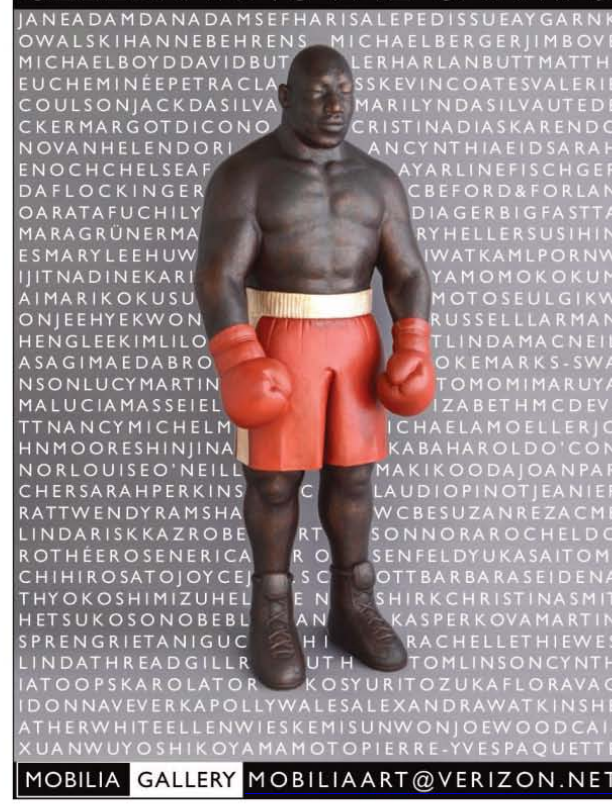

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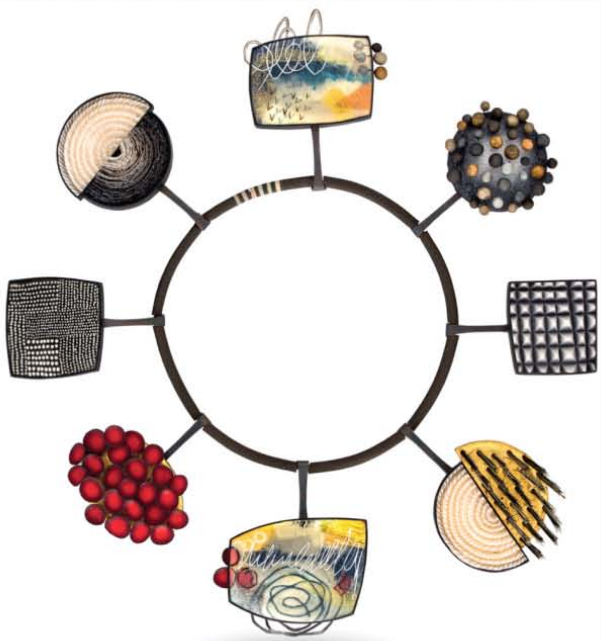

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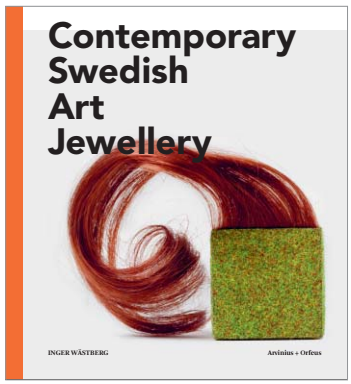
Contemporary Swedish Art Jewellery

INGER WÄSTBERG
ARVINIUS + ORFEUS
PUBLISHING, 2013
BY URSULA ILSE-NEUMAN



WHEN HER HUSBAND was named the Swedish Consul General in New York in 1999, Inger Wästberg became uniquely positioned to promote Swedish art, craft, and design. In her initial remarks to her new book, *Contemporary Swedish Art Jewellery,* the author states that she became a champion of this "neglected genre," often boldly wearing handcrafted, avant-garde works to official occasions during her five-year stay.

A necklace by Mona Wallström made of freshwater pearls, silver, nylon and diabase was one of Wästberg's favorites and was a great conversation piece. An image of the necklace now serves as the frontispiece of her publication. Given the formality that Wästberg's social status required, it is all the more remarkable that she felt so self-assured in wearing the contemporary pieces she was naturally drawn to, rather than conventional "status symbols" comprised of precious metals and gems. After she returned to Sweden, Wästberg earned a master's degree in art history, and her graduate thesis on modern Swedish art jewelry forms the foundation of this publication. Wästberg presents more than 100 generously illustrated works, predominantly in color, by 31 "makers," each of whom is introduced by a concise one-page biography that provides valuable insights into the artist's approach and accomplishments. Wästberg focuses on works created in the past five years, and no more than a handful are older; the earliest is a 1993 neckpiece by Hedvig Westermark. Well-established artists with decades of output, such as Tore Svensson and Wallström, are represented only by recent works.

Frontispiece with necklace by Mona Wallstrom

Following a foreword by David Revere McFadden, former chief curator at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, Wästberg's introductory essay surveys, in broad sweeps, the history of contemporary Swedish jewelry design from the 1930s to the present. In the course of her chronicle, she notes that the "leftist movement of 1968 meant a break in the progress of art jewelry." The politicized atmosphere in Sweden in the '1960s and '70s suppressed artistic freedom and demanded that art should serve society. As an example, the metal arts and jewelry program at Göteborg's College of Design and Crafts (HDK) was closed for seven years as individual artistic expression was diverted to industrial design.

Insight into a neglected genre

It was a time of major change in my life. I was Director General of the Swedish Disability Ombudsman and as such, a human rights activist. I had decided to join my husband, who had been appointed Consul General in New York, and leave my previous life behind.

New York was exciting. The core role of the duty, which is designed so that an accompanying partner is given an important – albeit, unpaid – role, was to spread knowledge of and interest in Sweden. In my case, this meant drawing from my prior interest in art and design.

Part of it was straightforward. These were the years of design and architecture: The Armory Show took place in March every year, the big furniture fair in May. Much of the work was about making contacts, organising events and generating curiosity.

Art jewellery was not a genre that received state funding, nor one that attracted public investments. Only a few American specialists had knowledge of Swedish jewellery, and even they would mostly refer back to the jewellery whose design was most closely tied with Swedish modernist tradition.

I consistently wore Swedish jewellery, both for everyday use and for my frequent official engagements. Among the pieces I had bought was a large necklace by Mona Wallström, which often became a conversation piece and led to opportunities to promote Swedish art. When our term in New York ended, I was commissioned by the Bard Graduate Center for Decorative Arts, Design History and Material Culture to curate an exhibition called *Contemporary Swedish Silver: New Approaches to an Enduring Tradition of Craft and Design* at the Seventh Regiment Armory. Among the jewellery I exhibited were pieces from Hosse, at the time Gothenburg's most sophisticated jewellery gallery.

I hungered for more. On my return to Sweden, I began to systematically collect jewellery, and I went on to earn an MA in art history and wrote my thesis on modern Swedish art jewellery.

6

Mona Wallström, necklace, freshwa…
Freshwater pearl, silver, nylon, diabase, 16 ½ in.

7

Following a foreword by David Revere McFadden, former chief curator at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, Wästberg's introductory essay surveys, in broad sweeps, the history of contemporary Swedish jewelry design from the 1930s to the present. In the course of her chronicle, she notes that the "leftist movement of 1968 meant a break in the progress of art jewelry." The politicized atmosphere in Sweden in the '1960s and '70s suppressed artistic freedom and demanded that art should serve society. As an example, the metal arts and jewelry program at Göteborg's College of Design and Crafts (HDK) was closed for seven years as individual artistic expression was diverted to industrial design.

Wästberg mentions that with the changes in the social climate of the 1980s a new generation of jewelry artists emerged, but she emphasizes that the most important changes for the better occurred in the 1990s. She points to the importance of a free-market economy and an emphasis on individualism which, in turn, fostered a focus on the experience of "art" in one-of-a kind jewelry. In 1992, HDK resumed offering courses in art jewelry under Tore Swensson, who also joined with Wallström to open the highly regarded "jewelry-only" Galleri Hnoss in Göteborg in 1997. In her essay, Wästberg acknowledges the invaluable influence of "imported" jewelry stars into Sweden in the new millennium. Important contributions were made to major Swedish jewelry programs, especially by Dutch jeweler Ruudt Peters, whose 2004 appointment revitalized the jewelry department (now called Ädellab) at the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design/Konstfack in Stockholm. Since 2008 it has been under the direction of Karen Pontoppidan, an innovative jeweler and experienced teacher who is originally from Denmark. Their emphasis on individuality and personal expression, experimentation with unconventional materials in unusual combinations, violations of formal taboos and standards of wearability encouraged many young Swedish jewelry students to adopt their mentors' attitudes towards jewelry making. This free-wheeling spirit is apparent throughout the works featured in the book.

The selected artists are firmly placed in the mainstream of international contemporary art jewelry, in which national characteristics are increasingly hard to detect. Nevertheless, Wästberg believes that Swedish Modernism's lingering emphasis on functionality and rationality set back the development, or at least the appreciation, of the new Swedish art jewelry. Given Wästberg's staunch support of contemporary Swedish work, it is not surprising that she begins her essay by disassociating contemporary Swedish jewelry from mid-century Swedish (silver) jewelry.

Determined to encourage her audience to consider today's Swedish jewelry in a new light, she calls the work of Viviana Torun Bülow-Hübe, Wiwen Nilsson and Sigurd Persson "stuffy," despite, or perhaps because, they are generally recognized as Sweden's most admired modernist jewelers.

Leafing through the images, we find the works arranged alphabetically by the artist's name, with no hierarchies: young talents appear alongside established artists and influential mentors such as Svenssen, Wallström, Hedvig Westermark, and Jenny Edlung. A chronological arrangement might have given the reader a somewhat clearer understanding of the development of the field. A handful of objects are shown on the body, but the majority are presented as art objects in their own right. It is immediately apparent that the powerful influence of Swedish Modernist jewelry, with its clean, unadorned lines, has given way to a postmodern aesthetic: the interest has shifted to concept and content, using novel materials and techniques in works that create fresh compositional relationships between diverse design elements, as well as with the human body.

Many works are inspired by nature, ranging from ebullient growth, to unforgiving decay, and often blur the boundaries between attraction and repulsion. A number of artists on this topic have gained international recognition through their masterful marriage of concept, materials, and technique. They include Hanna Hedman, whose dramatic, darkly beautiful neckpieces, often symbolic of grief and impermanence, combine powder-coated copper with galvanized sheet silver that has been drilled, burned, and twisted. Agnes Larsson's stunning "Carbo" series of large, shield-like neckpieces are crafted in the blackest of coal joined by horsehair. Märta Mattson's strangely compelling fossil necklaces and brooches made of cicadas, crushed copper ore, glitter, resin and silver. Other works are more abstract but employ materials derived from nature, such as Samma Svederstedt's birch wood rings and rings, brooches, and necklaces of wood crafted by Lena Olson, Helena Sandström, and Annika Pettersson. This vein also includes brooches made from snippets of hand-made, lacquered paper by Hanna Liljenberg; works incorporating reindeer skin and leather by Svedestedt and Rut-Malin Barklund; and those featuring elk's teeth and perch skin by Catarina Hällzon. These works contribute to a Nordic, perhaps not specifically Swedish, sensibility, without a hint of Swedish Modernist traditions.

A number of artists continue to experiment with silver, but with fresh approaches, while others use plastics, synthetic fibers, photographs, cultured pearls, beads, porcelain, glass, and stones, as well as found and recycled materials, reflecting accepted international art jewelry practice today. The works reproduced in *Contemporary Swedish Art Jewellery* bear ample testimony to the fact that today's Swedish jewelers participate in the globalized art jewelry discourse, in which imagination and creativity reign supreme and innovative ideas circulate around the world at internet speed.

Wästberg is determined to separate the niche field of Swedish contemporary art jewelry from the long shadow cast by Sweden's laudable design and craft history. Her efforts to make the "new Swedish jewelry" better known to the rest of the world are ambitious and praiseworthy. This publication will have particular appeal to readers because of the visual pleasures offered by its illustrated works, with their great diversity of forms, colors, and materials. It also provides a valuable overview of the cultural milieu in which Swedish art jewelry has developed. Reflecting the positive energy and enthusiasm of the author, the book satisfies an important need for an English-language publication that brings to light the contributions of an accomplished group of jewelers to 21st-century art jewelry.

Wästberg is determined to separate the niche field of Swedish contemporary art jewelry from the long shadow cast by Sweden's laudable design and craft history.

Ursula Ilse-Neuman is a curator of art, craft and design and Consulting Curator of Jewelry at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York.

Andrea Williams
Earth Bound Beauty

BY ANDREA DINOTO

Cherry Blossom Ring, from "Kebyar Blossom" series, 2010
recycled 18k gold, Venetian glass, found beach stone
3 ½ x 2 ½ x ½"
2011 Saul Bell Design Award Finalist

Andrea Williams (left) and her assistant Ia model the jeweler's stone-based jewelry in the booth at the 2013 Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show

EVERY OTHER DAY, Andrea Williams goes down to the beach, about a mile and a half from her home in Cohasset, MA, to collect stones. The best time to go, she says, is on misty mornings when the stones are wet and show their true colors: gleaming black, mottled greens, browns, and grays. Williams will transform choice examples of these common elements into the uniquely uncommon jewels upon which she has based Bound Earth, a successful and growing business committed to ethical jewelry production. A 1993 graduate of RISD, Williams always knew that jewelry was her true métier, but, to earn a living, she initially took a six-year sojourn away from the field, working as a schooner chef off the coast of Maine, then in restaurant management. Eventually, though, she found the long hours exhausting, and with the birth of her son ten years ago, she decided to transition back to jewelry. But what sort of jewelry?

Williams's decision came as an epiphany one morning in 2005, as she walked on the beach. "The tide had gone out," she recalls. "The water was sparkling and I saw stones lying in perfect symmetry on the sand." To Williams, they resembled a necklace, so she picked them up and made one. "I drilled three holes in each stone," she says, "and created a silver hinge connecting one to another." The following year, she sent her portfolio to the Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston with the hope of being included in their retail gallery, but as it turned out, she was accepted into the Society's now-biannual exhibition, "From Minimal to Bling," where she presented the beach-stone necklace and other pieces. "It was a huge success," says Williams delightedly, "and sold out."

"I live a natural, holistic lifestyle," she says, "and I'd rather be walking on the beach or in the woods."

With her jewelry career now effectively launched, Williams began to enter (and win) competitions and scholarships, thereby acquiring representation in leading craft galleries around the country. Wishing to keep her focus as well on her family, Williams limits travel to only four or five shows per year, and relies on her photographer husband to handle web design and images.

Williams says her business has grown almost entirely via word of mouth. That she does no personal marketing is "one of my downfalls in my big plan," she says, admitting that she joined Facebook only last fall. "I live a natural, holistic lifestyle," she says, "and I'd rather be walking on the beach or in the woods." Still, Williams devotes considerable time to making, working out of a converted 20- by-20-foot barn, albeit one heated only by a wood stove (she gets up at 6 every morning to light it) and with no running water (hose-filled buckets are lugged in). Aided by two part-time assistants, who help with extensive finishing work, including hours and hours of sanding, Williams produces striking stone-based pieces inlaid with silver or gold (she uses only recycled metals), some accented with hand-pulled Venetian glass. "You have to touch the pieces," Williams maintains, in order to fully appreciate the stones' silken surfaces, achieved through sanding. In addition, she explains, "beach stones show as wet when sanded," thus retaining their vivid hues.

Williams's Zen-inflected minimalist designs often call for lapidary work in which stones are both carved (e.g., hollowed out for rings and bracelets) and sliced (particularly for earrings) to achieve both wearable weight and aesthetic form. So fine is Williams's inlay

Undone Necklace, 2011
found beach stones, fine silver, sterling silver
length 18"

work that prospective clients often ask if the designs are painted on. For *Undone Necklace,* a choker of 19 mottled green stones, Williams was inspired by an Andy Goldsworthy waterwork, in which a floating nest was lifted and slowly deconstructed by the tide. Her interpretation depicts the nest's disintegration, with inlay patterns of slender silver sticks that reconfigure from stone to stone. The dramatic design of the *Cherry Blossom Ring*—a finalist for the 2011 Saul Bell Design Award—is inspired by Japanese screen painting: stylized, gold-stemmed red flowers are inlaid in an oval black stone lined in 18-karat gold. When attending shows, like the Philadelphia Museum Craft Show, Williams presents her work—which ranges in price from $300 to about $6,000—in a minimalist booth with walls covered in stretched white fabric and in white cases with slanted glass tops she made herself. The idea, she says, is to "create a Zen feeling, white and soothing," for the naturalistic stonework. Williams's website offers a useful full-color introduction to her diverse designs (commissions included), each with an informative caption as to inspiration and techniques employed. In every case, "beach stone" is the simple modifier for the main material. "I don't investigate their geological compositions," says Williams, "because I don't want any one stone to become more precious to me than another."

Furthermore:
www.boundearth.com

Andrea DiNoto is a New York–based writer on art, craft and design.

Articulated Brooch, 2014
wild silk cocoons, oxidized silver, lab grown white sapphires
9 x 4 ½"

Boston, Massachusetts
Revolutionary from the Start

BY PATRICIA HARRIS AND DAVID LYON

Boston might not be quite as politically charged as it was in 1775, but it's a city with a lively arts scene and a vibrant community of studio artists.

METALSMITHING AND BOSTON go a long way back. Patriot Paul Revere was more famed in his day for silver bowls, teapots, and, ultimately, bronze church bells than he was for his mad-dash gallop one April night to warn of British troops on the march. Boston might not be quite as politically charged as it was in 1775, but it's a city with a lively arts scene and a vibrant community of studio artists.

Boston began to institutionalize the arts a century after the Revolutionary War. In 1873, the Massachusetts state legislature established the first publicly funded art school in the U.S., to train public school art teachers and to prepare the artists, artisans, and designers in demand by local industries. Today the Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) offers a BFA in Jewelry and Metalsmithing, as well as an MFA in multiple three-dimensional media. MassArt also offers continuing education courses in metalsmithing and occasionally hosts symposia on metals and jewelry. During the SNAG conference in 2015, exhibitions in two of its galleries will highlight work by metals alumni and by Dutch jeweler Ruudt Peters.

When the Museum of Fine Arts was founded in 1880, three years after MassArt, it created a School of Drawing and Painting that evolved into the School of the Museum of Fine Arts (SMFA). It awards both BFA and MFA degrees and offers a concentration in metals at both levels. Students pursue academic courses at Tufts University and receive studio instruction at SMFA. A limited number of classes are also offered each semester through continuing education.

PAUL REVERE, JR
Sons of Liberty Bowl, 1768
silver
height 5 ½"
PHOTO: © MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

The North Bennet Street School (NBSS) was established in 1885 in the North End, literally steps from the Paul Revere House. As part of the settlement house movement, it originally trained immigrants in various forms of artisanry. The hands-on, skills-oriented instructional programs have evolved over the years, and NBSS offers a full-time curriculum in Jewelry Making and Repair as well as occasional continuing education workshops that also emphasize fabrication. The school's gallery and shop present the work of faculty, students, and alumni.

The Society of Arts and Crafts (SAC) was founded in 1897 as a Boston outpost of the English Arts and Crafts movement. Its stated goal was "to develop and encourage higher standards in the handicrafts," a charge that it continues to this day. Although SAC does not offer classes, it does have a mentoring program in business practices. SAC also presents annual Artist Awards to three New England crafts artists working in a variety of media, including metals. With gallery space and a shop in the prime Newbury Street art gallery district within Back Bay, SAC continues to hone the public appreciation of fine craft. For even broader exposure to the field, SAC sponsors CraftsBoston shows in December and in the spring.

From May through October, the weekly crafts market at the outdoor SoWa (South of Washington) Market in the South End provides an opportunity for artists to sell directly to the public. In keeping with the casual nature of the event, the most successful studio jewelers present work priced $100 or less. The broader market for more expensive studio jewelry boomed in Boston in the 1990s, in part thanks to several active collectors, including Daphne Farago. Some of that market retreated during the recession, and walk-in gallery sales of high-end pieces remain soft.

Veteran local studio jeweler Michele Mercaldo opened a combination studio and gallery in the South End three years ago. In addition to her own work, she represents about a dozen other local, national, and international studio jewelers. For the

Participants in the Jewelry-Making and Repair program at Boston North Bennet Street School

upcoming SNAG conference, she has invited local artists to contribute to a theme show about sense of place, using found objects from the Boston area as the point of departure.

More established galleries include Quadrum in the affluent suburb of Chestnut Hill, which represents a wide selection of local, national, and international artists as well as the work of high-end commercial design studios. Across the Charles River from downtown Boston, Mobilia Gallery opened in 1978 in Cambridge. It has been a leader on the local jewelry scene, thanks in part to an ambitious program of openings, talks by featured artists, and invitational shows that draw top studio jewelers from the U.S., Europe, and Japan.

Jewelry is always a major focus at Mobilia. During the SNAG conference, the gallery will mount an invitational exhibition featuring jewelry and vessels inspired by historical pieces. Also on view will be a solo exhibition of work by Kevin Coates, and three smaller "spotlights" on striking tools by Sue Aygarn Kowalski, figurative sculptures by Tomomi Muryami, and sculptural jewelry forms by Etsuko Sonobe.

It's not surprising that Boston-area galleries represent so many local artists, given that a significant number of metalsmiths stay in the Boston area after finishing their studies. One factor in retaining talent has been the commitment of the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the Massachusetts Cultural Council to develop live-work space and artists' studio buildings, a push that began in the 1980s and has spread throughout Boston and into neighboring communities like Somerville. In all, there are more than 30 such studio or studio/loft buildings, with the greatest concentration in the South Boston Seaport and the South End. Most artists' buildings open their studios to the public at least one weekend a year.

Even the nearby city of Waltham, historically known for clocks and watches, has several studio buildings. More importantly, it has Metalwerx, an innovative school and community studio for metal

Students raising and forming at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston
PHOTO: JOE WOOD

Installation of necklaces on exhibit at Mobilia Gallery in Cambridge, Massachusetts

Jeweler Michele Mercaldo in her gallery and studio in Boston's South End.

arts and jewelry. The school offers technical workshops (typically two to five days), weekly classes, and one-day workshops focusing on specific technical challenges. Jewelers not yet established in their own studios can become "studiomates" at Metalwerx. In addition to their own work areas, they share a soldering and polishing area, specialty tools, kilns, a rolling mill, and a library. Short-term bench rentals are also available.

The entire jewelry field got a boost in 2006 when the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston became the first major American museum to name a full-time curator of jewelry. In 2010, the MFA opened the Rita J. and Stanley H. Kaplan Family Foundation Gallery dedicated to jewelry exhibitions. During the SNAG conference, the gallery will feature 100 pieces of Nubian jewelry dated between 1700 B.C. and 300 A.D. in "Gold of the Gods: Jewels of Ancient Nubia."

Emily Stoehrer, who took over the position as curator last September, notes that the Nubian jewelry is one of the highlights of the MFA's encyclopedic collection of jewelry from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas, which spans the last 6,000 years. Another strength is contemporary studio jewelry, a selection of which is always on display in the Daphne and Peter Farago Gallery in the American Wing. The museum's choice to integrate "fine" and "decorative" arts throughout the museum also means that superb metalwork (jewelry, flatware, holloware) from all eras is typically displayed alongside paintings and sculpture.

The entire jewelry field got a boost in 2006 when the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston became the first major American museum to name a full-time curator of jewelry.

About a half-hour drive south of Boston in Brockton, the Fuller Crafts Museum shares some creative DNA with the MFA, since the Fuller's director, Jonathan Fairbanks, was the MFA's long-time curator of American Decorative Arts. In 2004, the small regional museum refocused its mission to concentrate on contemporary craft. Its jewelry collection has a strongly contemporary focus, with most works dating from 1980 to present. During the SNAG conference, the Fuller will be displaying acquisitions since 2012, including jewelry. The museum will also mount an exhibition of jewelry by artists associated with the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Deer Isle, Maine.

The museum shows are arguably part of what makes the Boston area special for metalsmiths. The achievements of the past are literally at their fingertips, providing a rich continuity for an ever-renewing community of students determined to reinvent the future.

Patricia Harris and David Lyon are journalists and critics based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

NUBIAN
Double Hathor Head Earring,
90 B.C.–50 A.D.
gold, enamel
height 2 ¼"
COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

The Rotasa Collection

BY DAMIAN SKINNER

SUSAN CUMMINS LIKES to talk about her interest in outliers, jewelers who are recognized as excellent and important, but who exist beyond or outside the various centers of the contemporary jewelry scene. The heart of Cummins's Rotasa collection of approximately 350 works, the majority of which are by European jewelers, is what could be called "power objects": jewelry that has a certain force, a depth of emotion or feeling, and quite often an idiosyncratic or individual approach to the shared concerns that animate contemporary jewelry. Nature plays a big part in this aesthetic, as do unconventional and blunt material choices, along with an interest in non-western art, and the roots of jewelry in the amulet and talisman.

Perhaps Cummins is better known as a patron than a collector through her role as founder and chair of the board of Art Jewelry Forum, established in 1997. Cummins is also a director of the Rotasa Foundation, which gives donations to various non-profit organizations, within and outside of the contemporary jewelry field. Her collection began in the 1980s and '90s with a number of pieces by American jewelers, acquired while she was director of the Susan Cummins Gallery in Mill Valley, California. However, in 2005—when Cummins first attended Schmuck week in Munich, and the Collect craft fair in London, as well as visiting studios, museums and galleries, most notably Galerie Marzee in the Netherlands—her collection took a decidedly international turn.

Cummins describes her collecting as driven by a fascination with getting "to the basis of what makes jewelry so powerful to humans from a deep psychological place. I try as much as possible to understand the mysteries of our existence through the feelings we attach to these small but powerful objects," she says.

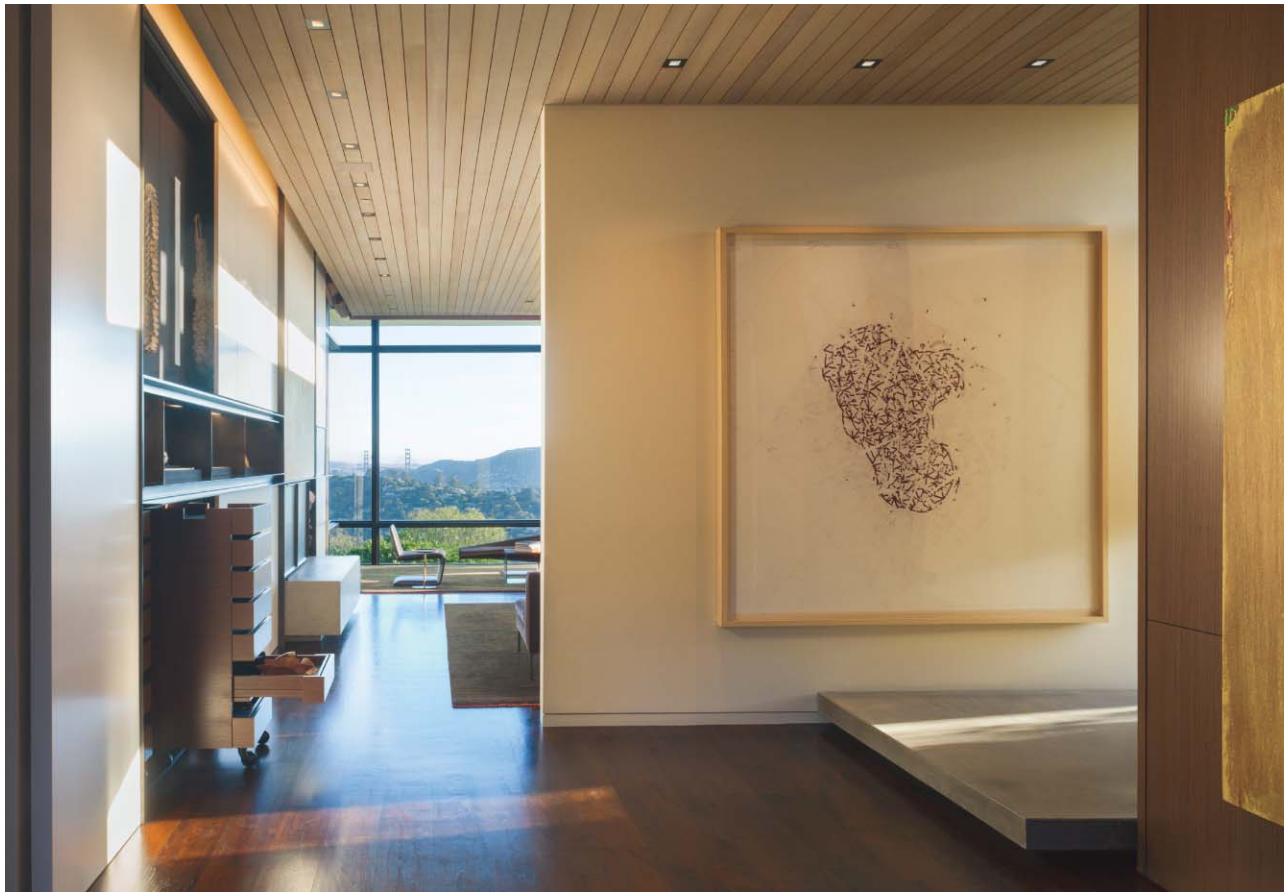
As an example, Cummins turns to the necklaces of German jeweler Dorothea Prühl, who is now represented by 15 pieces in the Rotasa collection. Her strategy of collecting a number of jewelers in greater depth has been a gradual development. Along with Prühl, artists well represented include Ruudt Peters, Bernhard Schobinger, Kadri Mälk and Warwick Freeman. Their presence in the collection is a result of Cummins's definition of what interests her, as well as the confidence to back her own tastes and inclinations.

There can't be many private collections of contemporary jewelry that inhabit a specially designed architectural environment, as does the Rotasa collection in Cummins's Marin County home, designed by Aidlin Darling. In a living room with an enviable view of the San Francisco Bay, one of the walls reveals itself to be a kind of domestic gallery: alcoves are divided with steel panels and backed with dark grey–felted fabric along the center, removable drawers in cabinets underneath, and large fabric-covered display panels above.

Designed to house and display the majority of the Rotasa collection (a few pieces also reside in drawers and on shelves in Cummins's office), this environment makes the jewelry available to those who use the space every day as well as larger groups of students from the California College of the Arts (where Cummins is a trustee) and collector groups from other institutions. The space is nicely scaled. Small and big works can be displayed alongside each other, while the arrangement is flexible enough to suit objects wherever they fall on the jewelry-art spectrum. The drawers allow objects to be moved from the living room and spread out in the dining room and other parts of the house if so desired.

This display architecture is a hybrid between the personal and domestic (jewelry

Rotasa Foundation director and collector Susan Cummins



Entry hall of Susan Cummins's home with custom jewelry display cabinets on the left, designed by Aidlin Darling
PHOTO: RICHARD BARNES

DOROTHEA PRÜHL
Butterflies, 2008
cherry wood,
length of one unit 3 ⅜"
PHOTO: HELGA SCHULZE-BRINKOPP

Cummins describes her collecting as driven by a fascination with getting "to the basis of what makes jewelry so powerful to humans from a deep psychological place."

Opposite:
AIDLIN DARLING DESIGN
Jewelry display wall with outer sliding doors shown fully closed and retracted
wood, felt, patinated metal
overall 136 x 148 x 24"
PHOTO: RICHARD BARNES

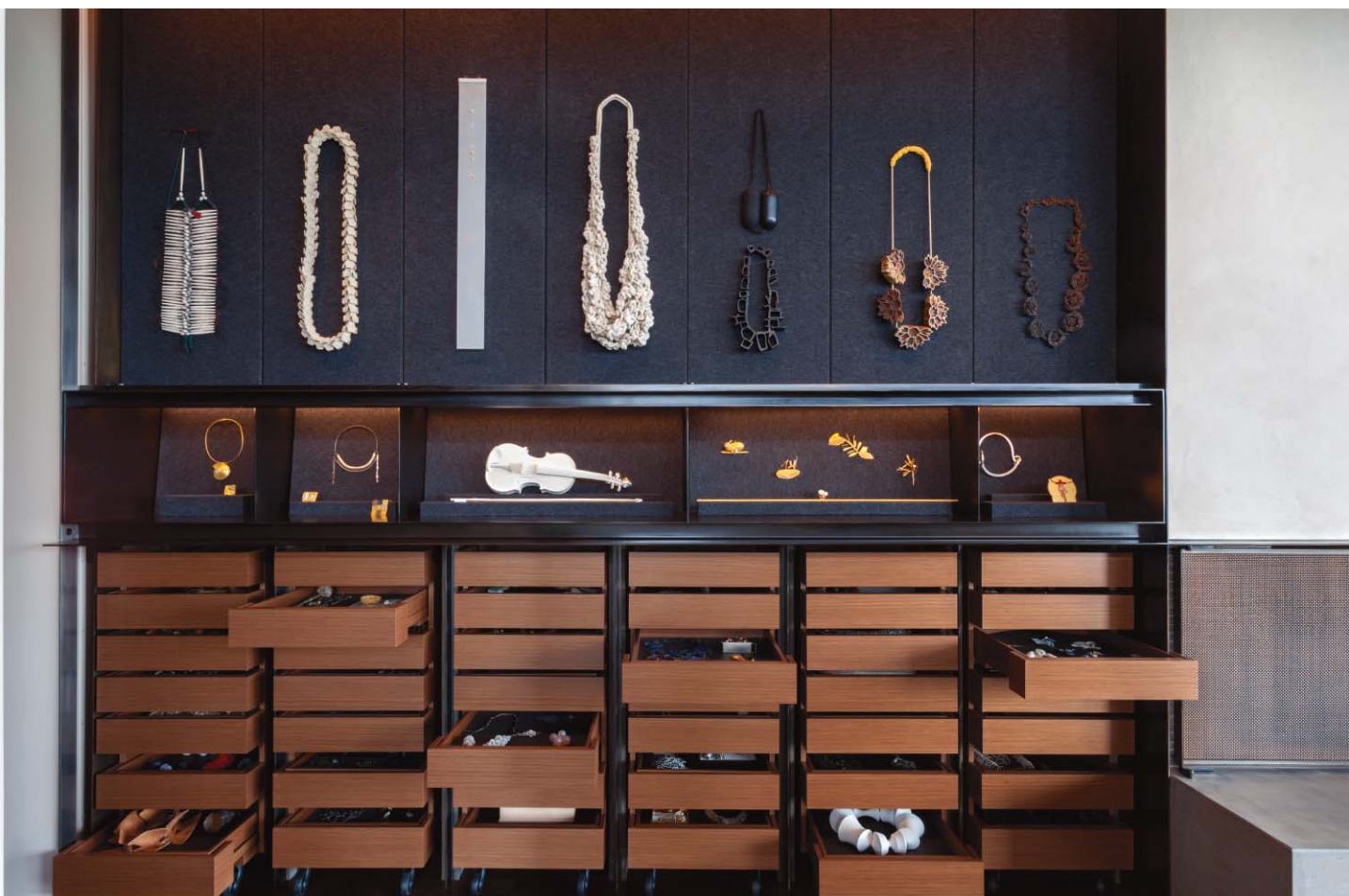
Detail view of display drawer with removable tray holding works by Tone Vigeland and Joan Parcher
PHOTO: RICHARD BARNES

KADRI MÄLK
Medusa 2, 2004
darkened silver, rubber, springs
3 x 3 ½ x ¾"
PHOTO: JOHN WILSON WHITE

that adorns a house and can be, might be, sometimes is, worn), and the public (jewelry that is on display rather than worn, and which can't be touched). There is a tension between the exhibition areas that are for looking only, and the drawers, which are about storage and selection and wearing. In the opportunity to touch (and maybe wear) the jewelry in the drawers, the viewer has a tactile experience that can be projected onto the objects on display, closing the circuit between them.

All of this—the location of the jewelry in an entertaining space rather than the bedroom; the size of the collection; the sense of curatorial activity and intentional display—is evidence of intensity and purpose. The Rotasa collection is, apart from anything else, a declaration that jewelry is worth taking seriously.

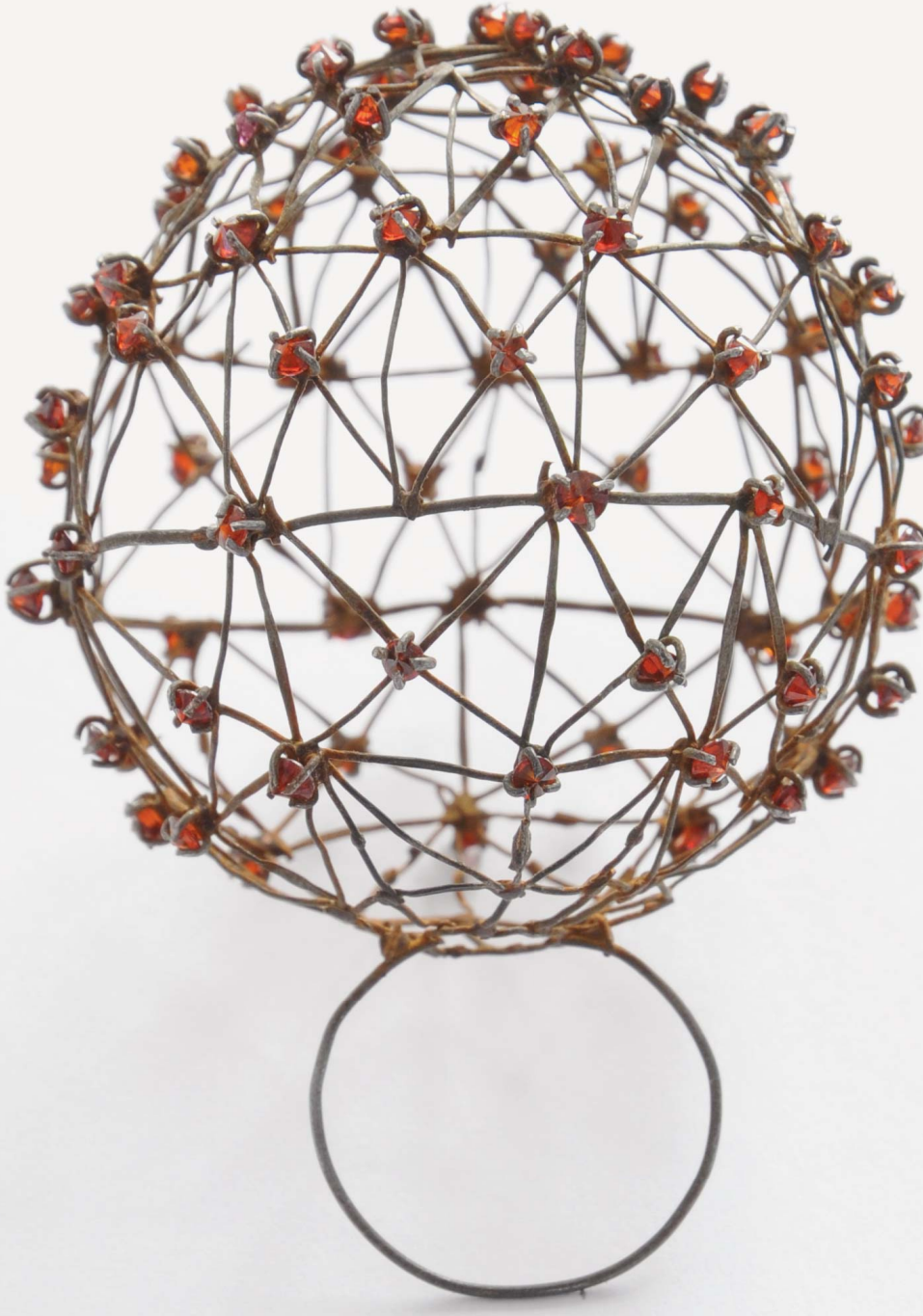
Damian Skinner, curator of applied art and design at the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tamaki Paenga Hira, is co-author of A History of Contemporary Jewellery in Australia and New Zealand: Place & Adornment *(Bateman, 2014).*



Bettina Dittlmann's Balancing Act

BY MARJORIE SIMON

Wire Rings and *Foreverrings*, 2011
dimensions variable



Ring, 2004
iron, garnet

Dittlmann's galvanizing effect on enameling was not unlike that of her mentor Jünger

After a Hug (brooch), 2008
iron, pyrite
5 ½ x 4 ¾ x 2 ⅜"

To make peace with oneself is easy.
To make peace with oneself is hard.
To make work is very easy.
—Bettina Dittlmann[1]

SOME STUDENTS FALL into jewelrymaking through an accident of scheduling; a beginning class fits into a crowded academic schedule. Others pass by the studio and, seduced by the romance of fire or ring of the forge, take up residence and never leave. German jeweler Bettina Dittlmann always wanted to be a jeweler. Providentially, a youthful consultation with a state job corps supported her by recommending she take up the venerable trade of goldsmith.

Dittlmann began her formal training at the rigorous state-run Professional School for Glass and Jewelry in Neugablonz, Germany. Its core curriculum of four major areas of craft study—glass and porcelain painting, silversmithing, goldsmithing, and engraving—also offers enameling without a major concentration. She's been practicing nearly all of these skills since graduating in 1986. A year later Dittlmann followed up with two years at the Academy of Fine Art, Munich, under the leadership of late master Hermann Jünger, who remained a mentor and friend to the end of his life. And so she began the process of becoming an artist in the world.

Dittlmann expanded her horizons by studying abroad, at the State University of New York at New Paltz, under J. Fred Woell and Jamie Bennett. It was "a very hard, very rich time."[2] Living outside Europe for the first time, she saw her provincial Bavarian upbringing in a wider cultural context. Despite arriving with considerable skills, Dittlmann took her time gaining her footing at New Paltz. Part of Woell's contribution was a sensitive teaching method that leads students to learn about themselves. And as she became more fluent in English, she engaged with Bennett's intellectual rigor and the dialogue of her classmates. She appreciated the spontaneity and freedom of American education and of her fellow students, who were serious but would also play. She also loved the extra-academic craft communities such as Penland and Haystack.

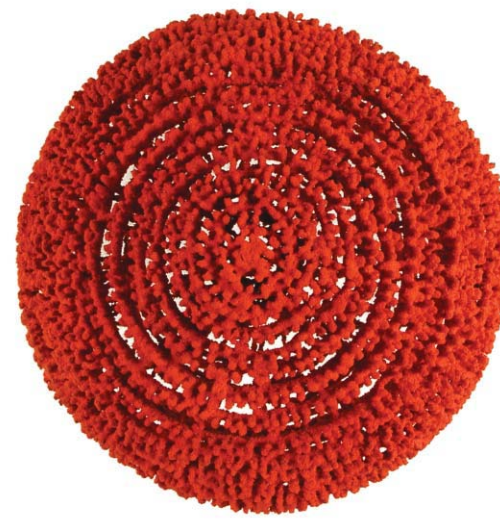
The 1990s were a time of openness, exploration, and growth; connections made there have proved durable and sustaining. In 1991 Dittlmann returned to study in Munich, this time with Otto Kunzli. Returning to the United States in 1994, she alternated continents every few years until 2001, when she went back to Germany, where she now resides. During that decade of flux, she taught for Kunzli in Germany and worked for jeweler Lisa Gralnick in the U.S. She lived on the East Coast in Brooklyn and the West Coast in Oregon. She began to address national and global issues and to make politically themed work, which she has revisited over the years. Without this restless period, she declares, "I definitely wouldn't be who I am."

During these years Dittlmann laid the foundations of her iconic enameled jewelry and black binding wire jewelry "drawings," some of which were also enameled. A group of "Broschen und Skizzen" ("Brooches and Sketches") from 1990–92 anticipates the architectural precision of subsequent enameled wire forms, with their interior and exterior structures and layers of colored glass granules.[3] They are also related to larger scale wire sculptures that accompany much later installations. With a group of earrings resembling collapsed vegetal pods, she treated the once revered but increasingly moribund vitreous enamel as an exciting new experiment in color, form, and surface. Though botanical, they are not pastoral, but grittily urban. Dittlmann's galvanizing effect on enameling was not unlike that of her mentor Jünger, following World War II, had helped jewelers overcome a stultifying reliance on craftsmanship at the expense of innovation. She pioneered the use of utilitarian silversmithing iron binding wire for three-dimensional drawings, validated the under-and-over firing of off-kilter, wonky forms, and seems to have single-handedly rejuvenated the technique of granular sugar-fire enameling.

In a 1995 exhibition of graduates of the Munich Academy, Dittlmann was praised for her sensitivity of line in a group of "Memento Mori" themed brooches.[4] Referencing well-documented botanical motifs of mid-19th-century Berlin iron jewelry, the dark, spiky, unkempt line fragments suggest mortality much like the cut ends in Victorian hair jewelry. Hardly beautiful, raw and gestational in their presentation, the bristling wire nests capture a film of enamel in the few primary colors that have remained her palette. Ethereal and ephemeral, wire finger rings receive the same surface treatment. The reverie of a thousand jewelry tropes, the tiny towers, turrets, baskets, and hearts are gesture drawings cloaked in scarlet. By comparison, her forged *Fuerimmerringe* (*Foreverrings*) of the same period seem capable of lasting forever.

First shown in 1998 at the Munich Trade Fair "Schmuck," the *Foreverrings* are the product of Dittlmann's collaboration with Michael Jank. They evolved almost by chance. Returning to Munich after New Paltz, Dittlmann was looking for work. She received a commission for a wedding ring that looked "normal" but was somehow different. She created a unique solderless ring forged from a solid button of gold that led to a second commission. Once she started making the rings,

Brooch (red), 2001
iron, enamel
3 ⅛ x 3 ⅛ x 1 ½"



Brooch (yellow), 2000
iron, enamel
1 ¾ x 1 ⅜ x 2 ¾"

Foreverrings
left: 2008, mild steel, 1 x 1 ¾ x ¾"
right: 2002, fine silver, 1 ⅛ x 1 ½ x ¾"

Foreverrings production at Bettina Dittlmann's and Michael Jank's former studio in Wald, Germany, 2006

she knew they would be successful, but she knew she couldn't do it alone. "If I had a partner, I could make it work," she says. Enter Michael Jank, a fine art student at the Academy. They began simply, in primitive working conditions, with a few stumps, two vices, some punches and hammers. They moved in together and began to look for a studio in Munich.

Serendipitous help arrived in the form of the shuttered Hospital of the Brothers of Mercy in Munich, which had been offered to a group of artists to share as workspace. Dittlmann and Jank could hardly believe their good fortune, working amidst the building's beauty and history: operating rooms, waiting rooms and ICU, rooms with beautiful tiles, light, curving floors (to avoid sharp corners where germs could hide), and windows with filtered light. Overcoming the initial intimidation of the surgical tool room, they quickly inhabited the spacious environment for working and exhibitions. Their collaboration began to evolve.

In the beginning Dittlmann and Jank worked at the same time, enjoying the rhythm of their movements and responses, now and then taking turns working on specific pieces, switching off after 15-minute intervals. Now, more sensitive to the noise of constant forging, they work separately. They don't talk about what they are making, though they may be observing each other. Except for specific commissions they don't start with a goal or intention. The rings go quickly, taking form more or less organically, with intense concentration on each one. Jank usually starts the iron rings, Dittlmann the gold.

Pure forging and pure metal, the *Foreverrings* are a valentine to metalsmithing and testament to Dittlmann's early training. Such objects can come into being only through silversmithing. Seemingly immutable, the rings appear to change depending on their presentation. Every view brings out a different feature. On white their varied colors are heightened; while a dark background unifies them. In a wooden box they are as elemental and enigmatic as Stonehenge. Evidence of human domination over nature, they are at the same time the embodiment of humanness in celebrating our marvelous hands, with opposable thumb, power grip and precision grip, tool making and tool-using in the service of symbolic objects. Rings are really the only jewelry that one can see on one's own body. These personify ring-ness. They are all about hands. Hands make them, hands wear them. Seen in person, they at first appear massive; you're not sure you would wear one. Once comfortably on your finger, the ring makes you aware of your own hand and reminds you of the hand of the maker. There is always the connection between the two.

By treating the four metals equally Dittlmann and Jank refuse to favor gold; each element in the metal quartet has its own mythology. Gold is the light of the sun. Incorruptible itself, it symbolizes corruption, colonialism, and conquest. Silver is the moon, the feminine principle. It has the potential for greatest reflectivity, though Dittlmann and Jank don't polish it to a mirror finish, preferring to keep its unique frosty white. Copper, the red metal that turns blue and green over time, is soft, abundant, and conductive. Iron falls from the sky. The most masculine of metals, it is responsible for the metallic taste of our own blood. The black rings are low-carbon steel,

Foreverrings, 2012–13
fine gold, fine silver, copper, mild steel
dimensions vary from 1 x 1 x ⅝" – 1 ⅜ x 1 ⅜ x 1 ½"
PHOTO: MICHAEL JANK

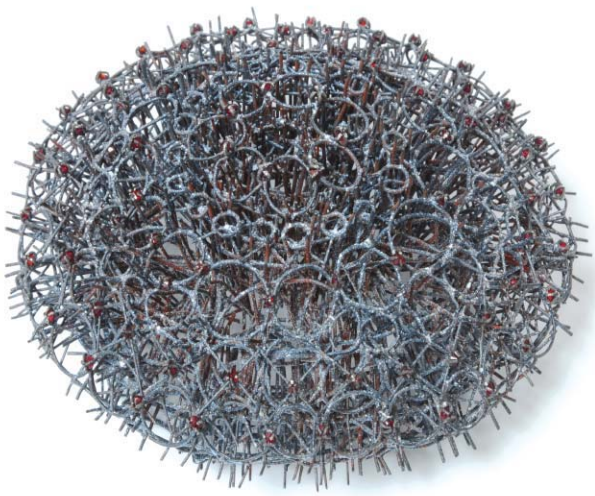
ductile and malleable. For centuries steel remained the secret of samurai swordmakers until Henry Bessemer discovered how to control the carbon content of molten iron. Coincidentally, Dittlmann's hometown of Passau had been a center for steel since the Renaissance, and in the production of swords, second only to the famed Solingen.

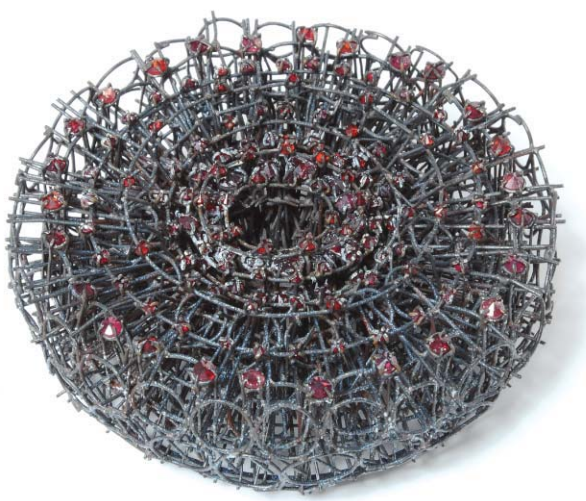
With her Neugablonz training, Dittlmann always thinks as a jeweler; Jank comes to the rings as a fine artist. Dittlmann says Jank has a "lighter approach" to the rings, as opposed to her "more extreme" goal: to incorporate as much metal as possible. Counterintuitively, she tends to make heavier rings, he lighter ones. Together they have made between 1,500 and 2,000 rings in the past 16 years, and they support themselves through their sale. Once created, no ring is ever destroyed. Even imperfect ones are not melted down, but kept, so that all traces of former work remain as shadows of living work.

Within five years of leaving Jünger and the Academy, Dittlmann had won the prestigious Munich State Prize, one of the many regional and national awards in Germany that recognize contemporary jewelry as one of the applied arts. She has continued to garner awards, grants, and prizes ever since. In 1998 she was awarded a grant from C Hafner Precious Metal-Technology, a German company that supports promising projects in goldsmithing. The grant was a loan of a half-kilo of gold for one year. At the end of that time she could return the gold, or buy it from the company. Her proposed project was to make five 100 gram rings, which in the end she kept. In 2001 she won her first Herbert Hofmann Prize at "Schmuck" for her series of rings "drawn" in binding wire, ornamented with enamel and set with garnets, glass and obsidian. Like drawings in air, they are impossibly light, their animated lines the embodiment of pure thought. They seem to have recently blown in from the

Pure forging and pure metal, the *Foreverrings* are a valentine to metalsmithing and testament to Dittlmann's early training.

The contrast between the wirework and the *Foreverrings* illustrates Dittlmann's desire for balance in her work and life.





Brooch, 2012
iron, garnet, enamel
4 x 3 ½ x 1 ¾"

Brooch, 2012
iron, garnet, enamel
3 x 3 ⅜ x 1 ⅛"

imagination and temporarily touched down for our perusal. Fragile and unwearable, they still belong to the body, as if some ethereal being could slip them on and float away.

In both 2005 and 2009 Dittlmann won the Bavarian State Prize in support of applied arts, for which there is no real equivalent in the United States. Most recently, in 2014, she was awarded first prize for art in "Beautiful Mind: A Jewel for Cranach," a competition for contemporary jewelry that commemorates the 500th birthday (in 2015) of painter Lucas Cranach the Younger, which will be installed at the Jewelry Museum in Pforzheim.

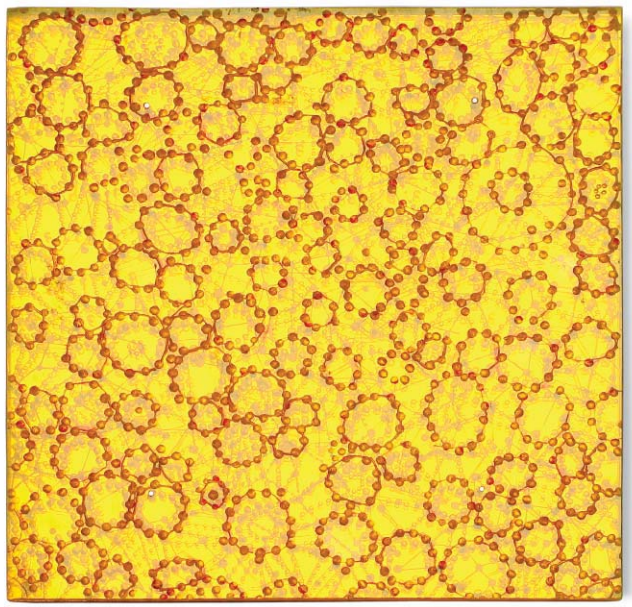
Dittlmann continues to make political work, especially for invitational exhibitions. For "The Enamel Experience, International Badge Exhibition" in 2007, Dittlmann and Jank made a badge with the slogan FAIR GOLD, accompanied by text addressing the No Dirty Gold campaign. Though not expressly *trompe l'oeil*, the enameled copper badge looks like real gold. Her early wire drawings were featured in 2014, in "Shock and Awe: Medals of War and Peace," a mixed media anti-war exhibition in England. They reference the aggression of the Iraq war for which they were first made, and the devastation of war in general, not least Germany's legacy in the 20th century. Viewed alongside the exhibition's representational entries, such as those depicting prisoners at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, Dittlmann's intimate objects seem subtle and insistent. Their obsessive lines and crosshatching suggest angry crossing out, in her words, "literally X-ing out" people. They recall barbed wire and danger through their exposed edges and deep black beneath a swipe of color, like a dark heart lurking beneath a civilized veneer. More recently, searching for a way to address the Fukushima nuclear disaster, Dittlmann began a series of drawings engraved on sheets of clear acrylic. Front and back are visible simultaneously, with the beauty of the chemical elements interrupted by the ugly by-product of nuclear energy. Some of the line drawings became brooches, with a hidden side known only to the wearer.

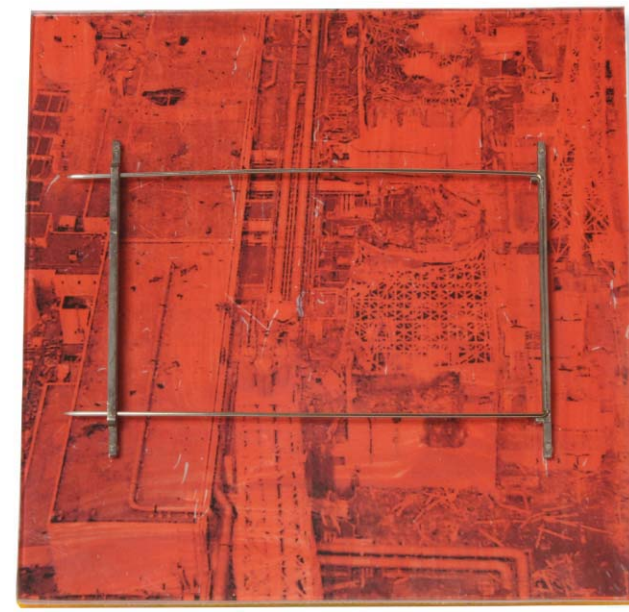
The contrast between the wirework and the *Foreverrings* illustrates Dittlmann's desire for balance in her work and life. Alternating between the focused wire constructions and the large movements of the *Foreverrings* in the studio is soothing to the artist. "Going back and forth makes me feel at home in my work,"[5] she says. A dialectic of physical and mental activity underlies her work practice. Forging harmonizes delicate wire work, while the "real work" of soldering anchors her to her early goldsmithing discipline. Now collaborating with Carolanne Patterson, a classmate from New Paltz days, she finds that carving the narrative imagery in acrylic sheet balances the additive process of soldering.

Over time Dittlmann has constructed ever more complex wire forms, with hundreds of solder joins and scores of firings. By now they are sizeable spheres packed with interior structures like nesting diatoms. As ideas gather form in her mind, she stokes her imagination by soldering, making countless wire Xs and Os. When she's ready to fabricate, the elements are ready for her.

Dittlmann's wirework is personal and she does not relinquish it easily. By keeping the pieces, she can continue

Fukushima (brooch), 2013
(front and back)
acrylic glass
4 ¼ x 4 ¼ x ¼"





to experience that feeling of being "in flow." "I want to get in touch with the way I am when I work," she says. "Being with the work brings me back to that mood."

Working intensely and intuitively, she is reluctant to intellectualize the process, as if speaking about it would spook the fragile muse. She prefers to remain open to whatever sources of inspiration come her way. For someone who cherishes connections and relationships, Dittlmann's jewelry forms a matrix of connections. It's how she can communicate, without words, without language or translation. Though she claims to find it difficult to express her process and her work in English, she is quite eloquent in the many poetic statements that accompany her exhibitions and catalogues.

Like many jewelers, Dittlmann believes that jewelry connects people to emotion, to states of being, to each other, to memory. It often expresses what cannot otherwise be communicated in ordinary social intercourse. Through hands-on making, she taps into a sort of mutuality that leads to a sense of ownership. One wants to do a certain thing with the material, but the material wants to do something else. Dittlmann says, "I try to work with the enamel, try to understand its laws and try to break them, but the enamel always wins!"[6]

Marjorie Simon is a metalsmith and writer residing in Philadelphia.

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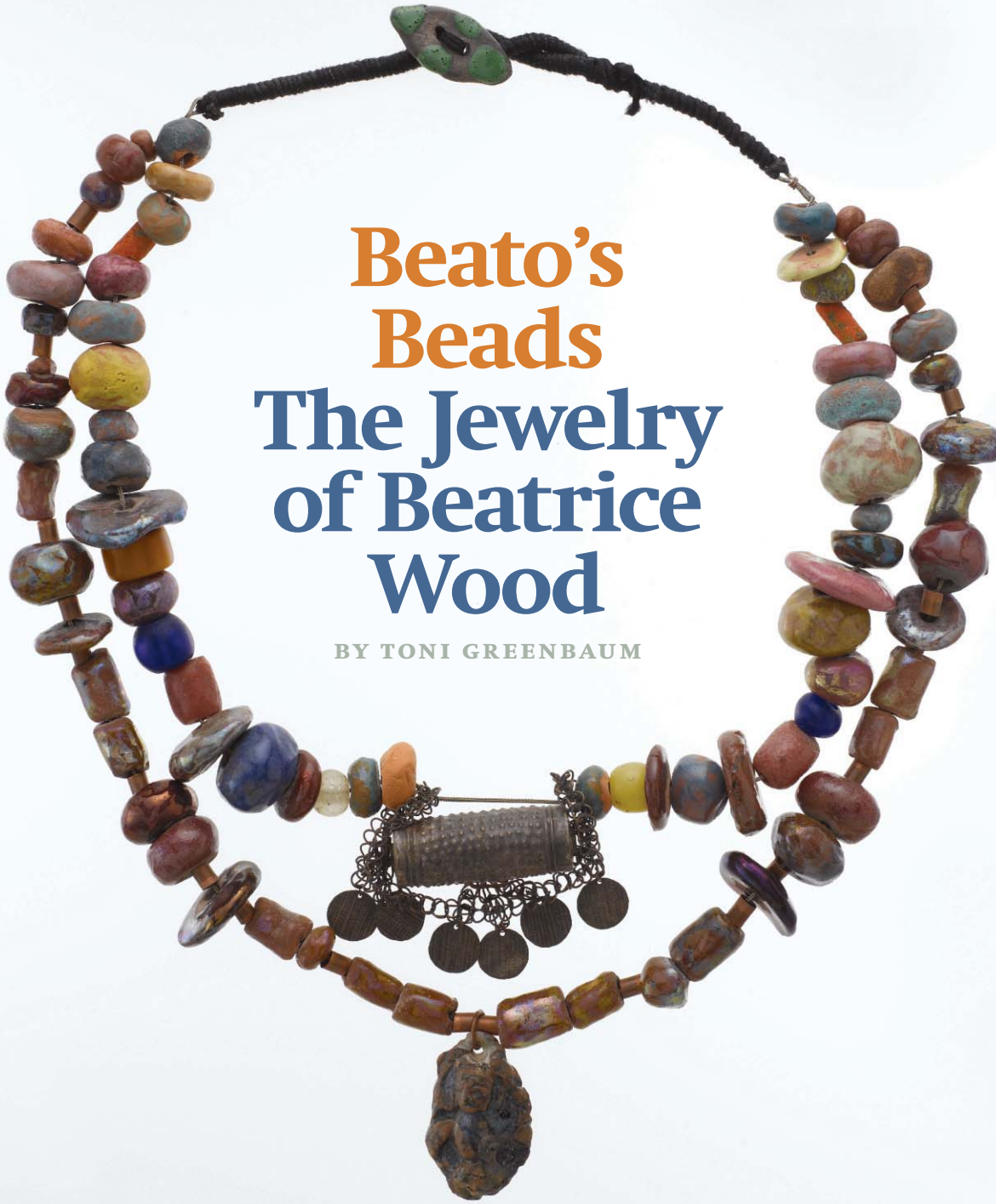
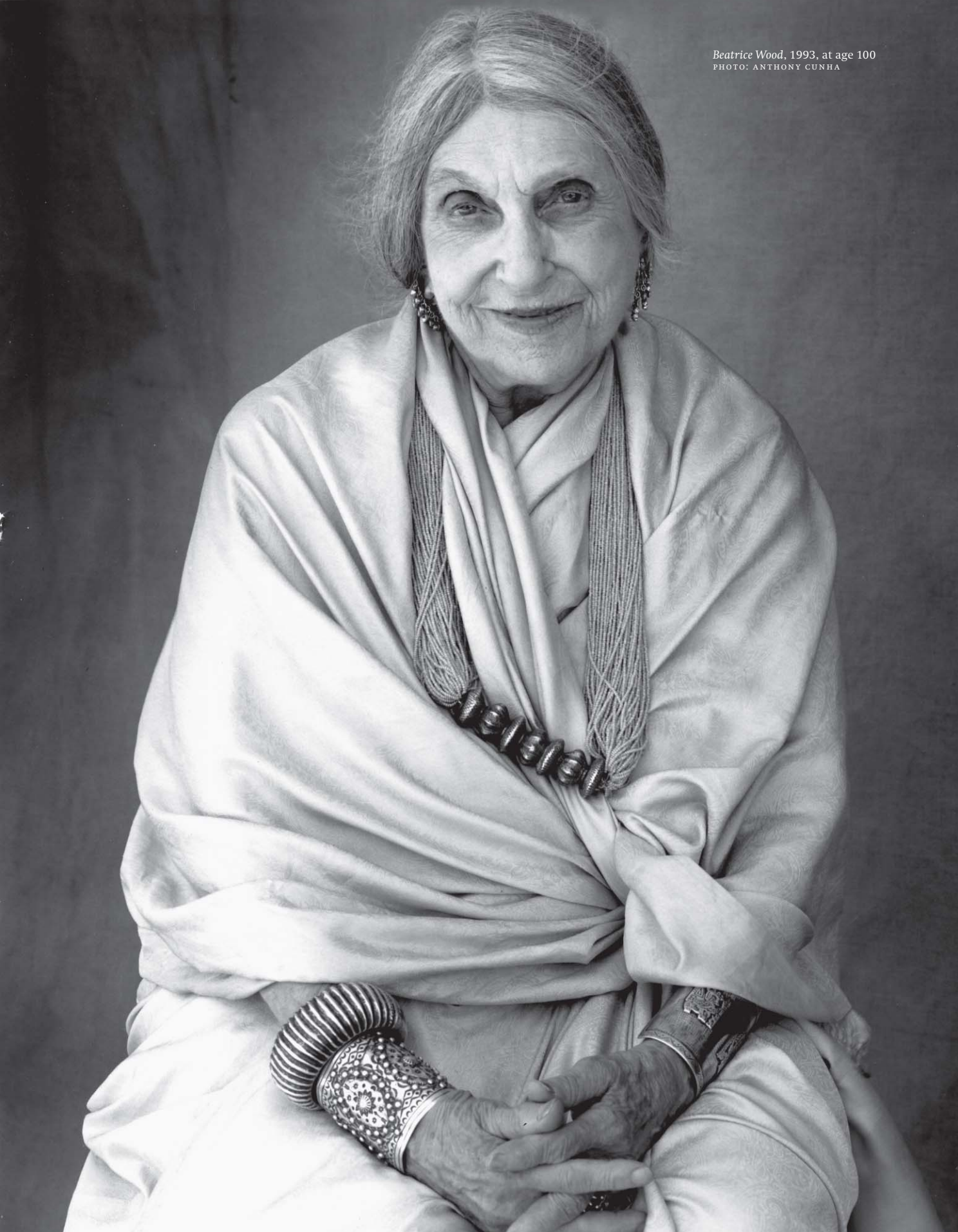
1. Bettina Dittlmann, in catalogue for "Medals of War and Peace," 2014.
2. These and all unattributed quotes taken from conversation with the artist, September–October 2014.
3. *Muenchner Goldschmiede*. 1993. Muenchner Stadtmuseum. p. 96.
4. Don Friedlich, "The Power of Subtlety," *Metalsmith*, Winter 1996, pp. 30-31.
5. *De Main a Main* . Carole Guinard, Monica Gaspar, Liesbeth den Besten, *mudac*, 5 Continents Editions, 2008. p. 97.
6. Bettina Dittlmann, *Metalsmith* "Exhibition in Print 2003," vol. 23, no. 4, p. 24.

Beato's Beads
The Jewelry of Beatrice Wood

BY TONI GREENBAUM



Necklace, n.d.
glazed beads, silver pendant,
ceramic pendant
length 20"
COLLECTION OF METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
OF ART, GIFT OF DONNA SCHNEIER



Beatrice Wood, 1993, at age 100
PHOTO: ANTHONY CUNHA

The artist Beatrice Wood, 1938

CALLED THE "MAMA OF DADA," Beatrice Wood (1893–1998) was a member of circles that included Constantin Brancusi, Man Ray, Francis Picabia, and Aldous Huxley, and was friends with Mina Loy and Anaïs Nin. Henri-Pierre Roché, author of the popular 1953 novel *Jules and Jim,* was her lover, as was Marcel Duchamp. As a matter of fact, the love triangle depicted in the book (and 1962 film) is purportedly based, in part, on their relationship. Later, Rose, the 101-year-old narrator of the 1997 blockbuster movie *Titanic,* was inspired by Wood as well.

Wood tie-dyed scarves for Isadora Duncan, and, during her early career as an actress, danced for Nijinsky, and shared a dressing room with Edna St. Vincent Millay. She studied ceramics with modern masters Glen Lukens, Otto and Gertrud Natzler, and Otto and Vivika Heino, and brought luster glaze—a challenging and unpredictable technique—to new artistic heights. Wood was a theosophist, vegetarian, and teetotaler (admittedly wishing to be sober when seduced). She adored chocolate, her two cats, and young men. Wood had a charismatic personality and expressed her eccentric style by wearing Indian saris and masses of silver ethnic jewelry. The title of her 1985 autobiography, published when she was 92, is *I Shock Myself.* She would live for another thirteen years—until the age of 105.

Beatrice Wood was born into a wealthy, overbearing San Francisco family. When she was still a child, they resettled in New York City, where she was raised on the Upper East Side, in a bourgeois Victorian manner that involved governesses, a lady's maid, and a stint at convent school in Paris, to which her domineering mother, who was taking one of several "breaks" from her husband, took Wood to live when she was seven. Wood attended prestigious boarding schools in New York (even though her family resided there), as well as one in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania; but as a teenager, Wood craved the bohemian life, and, much to her mother's dismay, traveled back to Paris in 1910, at the age of 17. There she briefly studied art at the progressive Académie Julian, took acting lessons with prominent members of the Comédie Française, Russian folk dance with Anna Pavlova's Mâitre de Ballet, and even pantomime. With World War I approaching, Wood returned to New York in 1914, acting with the French National Repertory Company there and in Montreal; she even toured briefly with a vaudeville troupe.

Wood was forty years old when she found her true métier.

In 1916, Wood met Duchamp, who dared her to make "modern art," after she coyly baited him with the comment: "Anyone can [do it], just lines and dots." Duchamp was, nonetheless, so impressed with her first drawing attempts that he enthusiastically supported her graphic endeavors and introduced her to modern art patrons Walter and Louise Arensberg, who would become her lifelong friends. Wood thus became a de facto member of the Dada circle. Encouraged by Duchamp, she drew amusingly bawdy figures and was even included in the first exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists, held at Grand Central Palace in New York in 1917. Although critical, Duchamp so championed her work that he used her design for the iconic poster announcing the "Blindman's Ball." Thirty-eight years later Duchamp would design the catalogue cover for Wood's 1955 ceramics exhibition at the American Gallery in Los Angeles. In the late 1920s, Wood followed the Arensbergs to Los

Gold Luster Chalice, ca 1980
earthenware
height 12 ½"
Image courtesy of Cowan's Auctions, Inc.

Necklace, n.d.
glazed ceramic beads
length 15"
COLLECTION OF METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, GIFT OF DONNA SCHNEIER

Angeles; she felt the land was beautiful and the city "wide open." Indeed, southern California became her permanent home and the locale where she would achieve eminence.

Wood was forty years old when she found her true métier. Frustrated by attempts to find a matching teapot for a set of neo-Rococo lusterware plates, purchased at an antique shop in The Netherlands, Wood decided to learn how to make one. In 1933, she enrolled in an evening adult education class at Hollywood High School. Ceramics proved to be far more difficult than Wood had anticipated, and she was surprised that she couldn't complete the teapot "in twenty-four hours," as planned. She did, however, learn how to make small, crude figural sculptures, which viewers found enchanting; thus she enjoyed unexpected but welcome success selling these quirky molded works, "sophisticated primitives," as she would later call them. Since she desperately needed the income, having been cut off by her parents due to her emancipated lifestyle, Wood decided to develop her budding talents as a ceramicist by studying about clay and glazes in back issues of the Ceramics Society bulletins at the library. In 1938, Wood enrolled in a course at University of Southern California taught by Glenn Lukens, a potter who viewed ceramics as a bona fide artistic discipline; she studied with him for two years, followed by another year with the celebrated ceramic couple the Natzlers— throwing with Gertrud and glazes with Otto.

Through intense study and hard work, Wood developed collections of domestic objects and small sculptures that sold through nationwide department stores and art galleries, as well as, eventually, her own storefront at "Crossroads of the World," a group of artisan shops located on Hollywood's Sunset Boulevard. Desiring the ability to both work and sell directly from her own studio-exhibition space, Wood relocated to the Ojai Valley in 1948. She ultimately settled, in 1974, into a remote home and studio, located on land belonging to the culturally progressive Happy Valley Foundation, high in the hills overlooking the upper Ojai Valley and facing the pink glow of Topa Topa Mountain. Wood signed her ceramic work "Beato," the nickname

Necklace, n.d.
amber, glazed beads, ceramic pendant
length 16"
COLLECTION OF METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
OF ART, GIFT OF DONNA SCHNEIER

Beatrice Wood, 1962, at opening in India
with Govenor Pednekar

Necklace, n.d.
glazed beads, pendent, leather thong
length 15"
COLLECTION OF METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
OF ART, GIFT OF DONNA SCHNEIER

given to her by a close friend's baby daughter, who couldn't pronounce "Beatrice."

In 1961, after having been discovered by Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, chairman of the All-India Handicrafts Board, Wood received an invitation from the Indian government to tour the country as a cultural ambassador, giving lectures on American crafts, and exhibiting her own pottery in 14 cities. Two years later, Wood was invited back to study and document India's cultural vernacular, gravely in peril due to industrialization. These and subsequent experiences in India would confirm her humanistic beliefs as well as aesthetic inclinations. During her trips, Wood voraciously purchased myriad examples of indigenous handicrafts, in all mediums, which led to an exhibition of her extensive collection—"Indian Craft and Tribal Art"—at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art in 1967.

These and subsequent experiences in India would confirm her humanistic beliefs as well as aesthetic inclinations.

While in India, "she acquired such quantities of Indian silver jewelry to wear around her neck, on her hands, arms, ankles, not to mention some gorgeous saris, that she was taken at times for an Indian...." In *33rd Wife of a Maharajah: A Love Affair in India*, her detailed 1992 diary-travelogue about her journeys, replete with charming, hand-drawn sketches, Wood further describes an episode when "a group of singing women came towards me and surrounded me, touching my jewelry and patting my arms. We could not exchange words, but we shared the love of necklaces and bracelets, a sufficient bond for any woman." While visiting three destitute women who had courageously left abusive husbands, Wood gave each a pair of earrings, "something frivolous to lift their spirits." "When one has nothing," wrote Wood, "is the time one must have something of beauty for the soul." Wood reveled in jewelry's sexual allure and wore as much as she could fit on her diminutive frame, including rings on her

Beaded Necklace, ca 1978
earthenware
length 16"
IMAGE COURTESY OF
COWAN'S AUCTIONS, INC.

Gold Luster Vessel with Figures ,
ca 1985
Earthenware
height 8"
IMAGE COURTESY OF
COWAN'S AUCTIONS, INC.

toes when barefoot. During lunch in Delhi with the modest spiritual philosopher, Jiddu Krishnamurti, Wood recounts that he "lifted his hands in horror at the collection of jewelry I wore [....] and [when I told him] that if I were younger I would put a diamond in my nose." Wood was a provocateur, and jewelry was one of the tools she used to captivate—the more jewelry, the better. She believed it "lowered barriers and had good propaganda value for making friends."

Each phase of Wood's illustrious life was marked by a different type of adornment. When she resided in New York, and traveled within the Dada circle, she wore long chain necklaces, and small dangling earrings, in the Edwardian and/or Arts and Crafts fashion of the day. After a trip to Gallup, New Mexico, in 1925, Wood assumed the regalia of an American Indian, which included multiple examples of Native American silver and turquoise jewelry and, later, silver pieces from Mexico. Photographer Marlene Wallace recalled an early encounter with Wood in her 1994 photojournal *Playing Chess with the Heart: Beatrice Wood at 100.* A young teenager taking ballet class at the Happy Valley School, Wallace saw reflected in the mirror "the most amazing sight I had ever seen—a woman in boots, clanking with American Indian jewelry, dancing in the back of the room." After being teased by friends for always being in costume, Wood attempted to dress more conservatively, "in suits," but soon rejected this dictum and decided to present herself the way she felt comfortable: in ethnic array (which she also believed disguised a figure that was less than perfect). Back in the early 1930s, when Wood first began making pottery, she would layer multiple chunky cuff bracelets on both wrists, and rings on several fingers, even when covered in clay. Jewelry was an integral part of not only her seductive style but her entire persona.

Wood's earliest attempts to make jewelry were simple beaded necklaces intended as "theater jewelry," which she would wear while being visited and photographed by the droves of visitors who made the pilgrimage to her Ojai studio. She considered greeting visitors a kind of performance and played the part accordingly. A *New York Times* article from March 21, 1944, refers

Beatrice Wood at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1978

to jewelry as part of her solo exhibition at America House in New York City. Indeed, twenty-five necklaces of colored round or square beads strung on cords, titled "Variations," were included in the show. Although seven sold, the remainder were returned to Wood, and there is no further mention of jewelry sold or exhibited by Wood again until the late 1970s.

Wood seems to have begun making jewelry in earnest around 1978. Wayne Kuwada, then director of the Garth Clark Gallery in Los Angeles, encouraged her to make necklaces for her 1981 solo exhibition, "Beatrice Wood: A Very Private View." Later that year, a show at Clark's New York gallery included necklaces. She created both matte and luster glazed ceramic beads, which she strung on leather or cotton cords and often combined with other elements, such as appropriated silver pendants or bits of repurposed jewelry, resulting in a style reminiscent of her beloved collection of Indian necklaces, bracelets, and rings. Wood made only about 15 or 20 necklaces that were ultimately sold to clients, a tiny part of her prolific practice, most having been created for her own amusement.

These days, only rarely are some of Wood's necklaces offered for sale. On May 9, 2014, Cowan's Auction House in Cincinnati, Ohio, sold a 16-inch necklace of glazed earthenware beads, in a variety of shapes—discs, spheres, cubes, and ellipses—that are interspersed with silver ethnic beads, and even some semiprecious stone varieties, and features a charming, blue luster pendant of a Buddha. The Donna Schneier Collection of contemporary jewelry, gifted to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2007, contains four stunning examples. One is made up of four sets of three earthy matte cylinder beads alternating with columnar and spherical silver luster beads. Another is comprised of disc- and melon-shaped matte grey beads, strung on leather, with a spherical silver luster pendant. There are two double-strand pieces: one that features an amorphous ceramic pendant along with an antique silver amulet consisting of chains and coins that connects ceramic beads of mixed forms and glazes. The other is of glazed ceramic beads, a circular pictorial pendant, and amber.

Wood was a provocateur, and jewelry was one of the tools she used to captivate—the more jewelry, the better.

Wood mixed numerous styles of jewelry together when she dressed—Native American, Mexican, Indian, and her own ceramic creations—as witnessed by Wallace's photos, which were taken over a 20-year period. Wood is adorned with abundant amounts of jewelry in almost every picture; in fact, Wallace often focused on her hands, with their piles of bracelets and rings.

Beatrice Wood's passion for jewelry is a prime example of its ritual power. Her personal story, and her close association with some of the most monumental figures in the history of art, is astonishing; and her jewelry—both what she wore and what she made—is integral to the narrative. She believed that wearing jewelry was a defining aspect of the feminine mystique. Personally, she was somewhat of a paradox, with her liberated but at the same time nurturing attitude towards men. Nonetheless, Wood would not have been the same individual without her jewelry. She may have been attracted to it initially because of its dramatic qualities, but just as "clothes make the man," Beato's beads made the woman.

Toni Greenbaum is a Brooklyn-based art historian specializing in 20th- and 21st-century jewelry and metalwork.

Tender Morbidity
The Medical and Funerary Practices of Mr. Clarke

BY GARTH CLARK

Miss De Caff, 2008
silver plated nickel silver coffee pot
6 ¾ x 4 ½ x 9 ½"

Brouhaha, 2007
silver plated pewter teapot, lead
17 ¾ x 9 ½ x 15 ⅜"

All the Usual Suspects, 2008
pewter, cast white metal, silver plated
nickel silver
dimensions variable

Author to Artist: *Where in time does your work live?*

Artist to Author: *Dickens-period London, absolutely no doubt. The rich and the poor thrown together. Close proximity of unbelievable filth and poverty. Belching soot, raw sewage flowing in gutters. Street vendors hawking wares. Pickpockets, prostitutes, beggars and vagabonds add color. Gutsy, real and honest. It is what it is, not dressed up, no facades or fronts. What you see is what youget. It is a vibrant, breathing, living place. A place where you hustle, duck and dive, need to be a wheeler-dealer to survive. My kind of place!*

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE to comprehend the art of David Clarke without traveling back in time. It's not that the work is not contemporary, it is; but that context and perception is added by drifting back 150 years ago. The time travel I speak of is not the creature of early silent movies with mad professors, ingénues at risk, gurgling chemicals, sparking coils and shorting electricity. It is more a miasmic experience, allowing one's mind to drift into a dreamscape and become an integral part of the social fog that wreathed Dickens's London.

Clarke's metal objects are tied to the pathos of a period when human value was being revalued, on a shaky cusp between kindness and cruelty in early Victorian London. If you extract this emotional context, and indeed, its romanticism, and the moral dilemmas of the age, both brutal and uplifting, one is left with nothing more than mute assemblages of ornamental and functional elements. And while even this, just the object, is not glib, because Clarke's handling of material has inherent gravitas, objecthood by itself does not allow us access to his narrative of tender morbidity.

Clarke's metal objects are tied to the pathos of a period when human value was being revalued.

I read the art of Clarke as one might a neo-Dickensian novelist who just happens to be a crafter and uses bits and pieces of metal as language, phrases or

words. Each form carries with it a sense of personal human history, identity and personality, travails and hardships captured by metal in portrait or caricature. I can imagine walking the streets back then, passing by someone, his body treated none too well by time and circumstance, with an awkward gait, unfortunate proportions and weight, and recognizing him (or her) instantly as the model for a specific teapot. This is not as fanciful as it sounds. That is exactly what a novelist does: creates fictional people who become intensely real to the reader. Clarke just happens to pull off this sleight of hand with metal and the appropriation of style and ornament.

When asked to write this essay I had reservations. I don't like writing about artists who have already been extensively profiled. The danger is that one ends up "chewing old cabbage," rehashing obvious truths that have already been stated often with greater erudition than I might muster. Untilled soil is more fascinating to me. What convinced me was reading the extant literature about Clarke; the writers have almost all completely misunderstood what he is doing. I had a similar reaction to the commentary on Richard Slee (with the exception of Grayson Perry's perceptive writing about his ceramics). Slee actually slyly relished writers getting it wrong, aiding and abetting them in the process. I suspect Clarke may do the same.

One could imagine a *Roget's Thesaurus* entry just for David Clarke: enfant terrible, brutal, scarring, violence, torture, acerbic, troublemaker, destroy, maim, deface, mutilate, ruin, and most recently, terrorist. Any article about him contains several of these terms or similar. Consider it the Mr. Clarke Writing Kit. However, Glenn Adamson's article for *Crafts*, "Experiments in Speculative Violence" (March/April 2013) aside from the title, has a finely tuned edge, and recognizes a strain of caring in his art that few have acknowledged:

> *"He then told me his motivations for making the piece: his mother was being treated for cancer at the time. He'd made the work not in his studio, but his kitchen, 'a place that had very strong associations with my mother and her making of tea and cake for all.' Had the objects been sitting on a plinth or in an exhibition case, it might have been another story. But seeing them in this way, being told this story, was an experience rich in narrative implication. It was like walking into a film via the prop department—a film about ghosts, I suppose, as the objects' material losses evoke an unspecified familial past, returning to haunt the present. So while Clarke talks tough, and sometimes in tones of bitter irony, there is in him a deep well of sensitivity, even sentimentality."*

I Want More! Spoons, 2012
pewter, silver plated nickel silver
dimensions variable

below:
Feed Me! Spoons, 2011-present
pewter, silver plated nickel silver
dimensions variable

One other piece of writing that addressed the notion of felony and Clarke's bad boy image in a more populist vein was a fragment by Edmund de Waal that appeared in a paper for *Think Tank*:

"I started by thinking about decoration as stickiness, of Alfred Gell's idea of decoration as adhesive. Talking to David Clarke brought this alive to me [as] as a silversmith he has begun to

Chuffing Marvelous and Friends, 2008
pewter, cast white metal,
silver plated nickel silver
dimensions variable

find smoothness problematic. One way he found of dealing with this was to attack the surface of the silver with salt and lead, to scar it.

Another was to find sticky objects. He bids for objects on Ebay that have had no other bids. They arrive he says, literally sticky, smelling of cigarette smoke and polish wrapped in newspaper. They are sticky in that they are unwanted, commodities that have got stuck. And they function as traps: highly decorated metal birdlime. He cuts them up, elongates, foreshortens, wraps them heightened and truncated, so that dissonant patterns are created and decoration subverted. Their functionality is not so much borrowed as nicked. This is not a gift. It is a steal."

Generally this complexity is missed. Clarke's career is seen with both glee by his admirers and horror by his (many) detractors, as a demolition derby of silver vehicles with Clarke at the wheel.

First, let's dismiss the *enfant terrible* tag. It was fine in 1997 when Clarke first began to stoke the fires, but has grown old with overuse, and Clarke is certainly an *enfant* no more. Clarke is *not* in fact the perpetrator of violence, not the demon barber of Fleet Street. Rather, he reveals violence, takes those that society has treated with extreme brutality, attempts to patch back their wrecked bodies and lives, and administers to them until they are buried in caskets of his own design.

The craft of Clarke interests me not at all. It might well be virtuosic, but if so that is hidden behind a disheveled facade. What is shown is solid workmanship, blunt, lean and economical, a little coarse without even a hint of the decadence from whence it comes. It has always struck me as the skill of a surgeon's hand rather than a silversmith, the former also a craft but one that is sanguine and has

Upstairs silver has been sleeping with downstairs pewter and as a result has been demoted.

"Ever So Slightly Sloshed" series, 2011
pewter, cast white metal
dimensions variable

no place for pretty or elegant. He repairs and extends life, whatever the cost to beauty, but the act is not intentionally destructive. Rescue is not elegant. But it is redemptive.

His vessels (I see them as society's vassals, if one might excuse the pun) are rarely bright silver, and even when they are, appear worn and soiled around the joints where feet or spouts are attached. They absorb more light than they reflect. The darkness is alluring, risky and mysterious. He also often uses a silver-pewter mix (the latter known as the poor man's silver and an early source of lead poisoning) that has complex and murky tonalities, distancing itself from the glamor and affluence sterling silver represents. It makes the vessel seem uncared for and a tad unkempt. The fascination for me is what his art means in terms of class. This is a potent thread of content. Materially Clarke combines upper, middle, and working class into an alloy of lesser, mixed stature. The work is no longer "pure." Upstairs silver has been sleeping with downstairs pewter and as a result has been demoted. None of his vessels feel ascendant in wealth or luck, and their social trajectory is downwards, falling through the safety net, losing style, income, limbs, health and worst of all, dignity.

I see all of the work, except for the coffins, as people. Let's begin with his spoons. They are his beggar boy clients, roaming the street in packs, numerous and unloved as feral cats, grouped together, as he shows them, in clusters for safety. Beggars often deliberately mutilated themselves, to increase empathy among their marks. Usually there was no damage to legs and feet or hands. They needed to be agile and swift to escape the law if pickpocketing was part of their game as well. Nothing is as useless as a slow-moving "picker." Facial scarring, particularly on an angelic face, was worth a good penny, causing Victorian conscience to tremble between shock, lust, and pity.

These are "asking" spoons, different to the teaspoon that helps itself to sugar at afternoon tea. These spoons request; they do not take. Each is unique; each is to a degree misshapen. None is truly elegant or beautiful according to the conventions of the Royal Guild of Silversmiths, although vestiges of a shallow, onetime prettiness do show through (an asset for a beggar). But they are strong, resilient from the scarring.

The spoon bowls have elements of grotesquery, like a

TerraGravyDaktal, 2007
cast white metal, silver plated nickel silver
6 ¾ x 6 ⅜ x 7 ½"

Ooh La La, 2007
silver plated nickel
silver coffee pot, lead
9 ¾ x 6 ⅜ x 14 ½"

tumescent boil, swollen, distorted, uneasy. Again, it is not Clarke who hurts and sickens them; it is their life. He portrays their condition with a tender precision. There are hints of ancestry, of descent from a higher class to the lowest. This is seen in the ornate stem of some spoons that come from a world in which cutlery was laid out in the approved manner at a table, where the beggars' antecedents once sat and where the spoon would no longer be welcome. Indeed, its presence in a formal setting would be unthinkable, scandalous even.

One imagines that each morning a line of beggars, wounded by their pimps, Siamese twins (yes, he has made those too) and other sideshow freaks, those missing limbs and seeking prosthetics, line up to enter Clarke's premises. The work *All the Usual Suspects* (2008) is a police lineup of felons, con men, and ladies of the night. *Chuffing Marvelous and Friends* (2008) seem better off than most, happy habitués of a pub, if a bit more polished. The "Slightly Sloshed" series is a minimalist but hilarious depiction of inebriation and gin-soaked beer-swilling street life.

TerraGravyDaktal (2007) has a strong anthropomorphic presence; a prosthetic leg juts out rigidly, the third leg is a walking stick to balance the body, and the handle is a hand on a damaged hip. The pose is riveting, painful but proud. *Ooh La la* (2007) is also telling. Elements of the piece evince pomposity and privilege that this pot-bellied teapot once enjoyed, or at least imitated convincingly. Now that status has become a distant memory and seems a touch ludicrous, a little obese, and its wounds are coarsely repaired with metal that is flat, graceless, and without ornament. He may have been to the manor born, but now resides precariously in the demimonde.

Dead on Arrival, 2011
sterling silver, lead
case 18 x 18 x 18"

Then there is Clarke's funerary practice. He receives his clients at the end of a painful, humiliating life, who require special containment or have corpses deemed too horrifying for other morticians to touch. Two coffins fascinate me: *Dead on Arrival* (2011) and *Brouhaha* (2007). The former is relatively affluent-seeming; satin and red velvet lines the interior but then one notices the scuffs and wear. A secondhand coffin is never a good thing. Inside is a matched set of teapot, creamer and sugar basin (a mother and two children perhaps), their bodies eaten away by some dreadful pox (actually Clarke has applied salt to eat away at the vessels) and yet is an open casket. Morbid indeed. *Brouhaha* is simpler, more stoic, no flash, all function. The casket is shaped at an angle to house a body that is not of normal shape. Its power as a form comes from two elements, its odd elongation and captivating, awkward drama of the lid left open, somehow seeming more monumental than the space it covers.

That is Clarke's interior world. When we drift back to the present there is instant relief from the darkness, seeing art in public, in white cube rooms, with intense spotlights highlighting every bruise, scuff, and scarred seam; but missing its Victorian setting, the sting is lessened. They are marks by an artist. Dickens's pen is no longer heard scratching in the background. Clarke's study of violence (social and physical) is less threatening when

One Day my Plinth Will Come, 2009
lead, silver plated nickel silver,
cast white metal
dimensions variable

it becomes theater on the sophisticated art stage, faux theatricality for the marketplace amid opening reception chatter and the clinking of wine glasses. The irony cannot fully reach us. We can laugh it off. His multiple footnotes tell the viewer the work is smart and this makes them confortable with his artistry, but its threat is lessened.

Clarke's skillful parody, his wit and satire and his outrageous banter lift the mood. The titles alone can be hilarious. A group of mutant forms, truncated teapots, vessels of various kinds and at least one spoon group is named *One Day My Plinth Will Come (*2009), and, on exhibition, of course it does. This softens the harshness of Mr. Clark's inner world. That changes when it's bought and placed in a domestic center. The banality of the everyday energizes the art. Living in someone's daily life, its potency and sobriety returns, much like the horror movie doll that, once removed from its retail setting, reveals more than the new owner bargained for.

Clarke is not a vandal let loose in a silversmith's workshop, but an artist of deep poignancy.

While this essay has been admittedly melodramatic, it is deliberately so, and that is the pitch-perfect voice to blend into the time warp in which Clarke's art travels. It is a device to reveal that David Clarke is an artist of extraordinary depth, that his narratives have the richness of good literature, and that the labels that have been so consistently attached to him—while no doubt amusing to this rabble-rouser and offering him some cover for his tenderness—fall far short of his true importance and emotional depth. Clarke is not a vandal let loose in a silversmith's workshop, but an artist of deep poignancy. Yes, he deals with hurt, but not of his own making. The perpetrator of the pain is our society.

Garth Clark, a widely published writer, is creative director of CFile Foundation and chief editor of CFile Weekly *online magazine, which is read in 125 countries.*

Jewelry Goes to War

BY KRISTIE ROSEN

Sweetheart Pin "Over There," 1917
PHOTO: ALYSSA KIRSTEN

Memories of You
WHEN I COME BACK TO YOU
There will be sweet birds calling when I come back again,
Songs of deep joy awaking, after the storm and the rain;
There will be sunlight gleaming, skies will be shining and blue
When I am by your side, dear, when I come back to you.
BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHERS, CARY & CO. 13 MORTIMER ST. LONDON
BAMFORTH, COPYRIGHT
MUSIC BY EILEEN SUMMERS

"When I Come Back To You"
Postcard, ca 1916
PHOTO: ALYSSA KIRSTEN

Trench Art Necklace, ca 1916
"Gruss Vom Felde,"
(Greetings from the field)
artillery shell driving band
PHOTO: ALYSSA KIRSTEN

THE CENTENNIAL OF World War I has occasioned several exhibitions and publications documenting various aspects of the Great War. Though little known or exhibited, the jewelry and other ornament produced at that time also merits renewed attention. Mementos, decorative objects, and jewelry created during the war were not only utilitarian, but held great sentimental value, and demonstrated nationalistic pride. Trench soldiers created keepsakes out of metal scraps from the battlefield to preserve their memories of war. Sturdy wristwatches were designed to survive the rigors of the trenches. Mothers wore sweetheart pins to honor their missing sons, and patriotic Germans traded their gold rings for ones made of iron.

As a result of intense fighting, the trench conditions were generally regarded as one of the most miserable aspects of World War I. Extending over hundreds of miles, the trenches were dug as protective barriers against the enemy. Life in the trenches was atrocious. They were often infested with rats and lice; soldiers suffered from poor hygiene and malnutrition; and the dead lay nearby, decomposing. In the midst of such ghastliness, soldiers often found catharsis making war mementos in between combat encounters.

Due to the intense fighting, the battleground was littered with metal fragments from shell casings, shrapnel, and destroyed vehicles. The debris could be readily fashioned into keepsakes, later referred to as "trench art." Decorative and sometimes functional, such objects were constructed by military personnel, citizens, and hostages. War scraps were formed into a wide range of items: aluminum rings, embossed bullet shell vases, and even cigarette lighters in the form of miniaturized tanks. Many soldiers personalized this art form by incorporating the very shrapnel fragments that had injured them in battle. One story recounts a soldier saying in anguish, as a surgeon removed a bullet from his thigh, "I'll get it made into a brooch for my wife!" These objects played a role in helping soldiers to confront the physical and mental trauma they endured.

Trench art varied in refinement. The majority of objects were very raw, but others were more skillfully constructed when proper tools were available. While some trench art was made during the war, most of it was created soon after the combat had ended, using materials combed from the battlefield.

Rings were the most popular form of trench art, and were often constructed out of found aluminum from canteens, military mess kits, or fuses from artillery shells. While searching for artillery shells, soldiers had to be careful, as some of the ordnance was undetonated. An American ambulance driver witnessed a soldier pouring "liquid aluminum in a casting which had water in it [who] blew his eyes out!" Nonetheless, soldiers were willing to confront many dangerous situations in order to find these materials for their self-expression.

In 1916, wearing trench art became a popular fashion statement, and many Parisian women began to flaunt this jewelry. Artillery shell driving bands, made of brass and

Trench Bracelet, 1914
artillery shell driving band
PHOTO: JEAN JEAN VINTAGE

encircling the base of these munitions, were converted into bracelets, pendants, rings, and brooches, which were often varnished to prevent oxidation. The front of a German driving band bracelet has a fluted pattern, and a safety chain is included at the clasp to keep it from slipping off of the wrist. On the inner part of the driving band is an indented lattice design, similar to the imprint left by a waffle iron. The main motif is an enameled German iron cross; within it is a Prussian crown, the letter W, and the date 1914. Surrounding the iron cross are oak leaves, representing the German oak, Germany's national tree. Germans co-opted the trench art aesthetic after the war by mass producing these types of objects, and they were advertised widely in magazines and newspapers.

Soldiers were willing to confront many dangerous situations in order to find these materials for their self-expression.

Trench art jewelry naturally often took on a sentimental tone, as seen in a brass necklace with the German words "Gruss Vom Felde" ("Greetings From the Field") above the floral motif. An oval artillery shell driving band segment acts as a frame for the central enameled design. This dainty necklace gifted to a loved one presents quite a contrast to the realities of life in the trenches. One hundred years later, the affectionate messages found on trench art souvenirs still continue to resonate.

In 1914, wristwatches became a highly sought-after accessory for soldiers and officers. Before World War I, wristwatches were only worn by women. Men preferred pocket watches, but these were inconvenient on the battlefield, since they involved several steps to retrieve and read the time. Designed to be user-friendly, trench watches were durable enough to withstand the harsh battlefield conditions. Trench watch specialist Stan Czubernat, author of the soon-to-be- published *Elgin Trench Watches of the Great War*, states that

Elgin Trench Watch and Integrated Shrapnel Guard, 1918
10k yellow gold filled
PHOTO: LRF ANTIQUE WATCHES

these wristwatches were secured to the arm by khaki or cotton webbing, cowhide, or pigskin straps. The National Watch Company (1864–1968), later Elgin National Watch Company, was the largest manufacturer of jeweled watches in the United States. They designed a wide range of trench watches as well. A metal guard often covered the face of the watch to prevent the crystal from breaking under battle conditions. The guard attachments were snapped on, joined to the watchcase, or slid through the watchband. Shrapnel guards were created in an industrialized process by die-stamping various metals. The designs for the guards were simple geometric shapes that closely resembled and preceded Art Deco motifs.

A 1917 Elgin trench watch was covered by a solid nickel shrapnel guard. The pattern of this guard is called a lath, and resembles the look of a partially opened venetian blind. A 1918 10k yellow gold-filled trench watch by Elgin features an integrated shrapnel guard: it attached to the watch's case and was released by removing its screws. The numbers on its face are black enamel, with the exception of the red 12. At that time the red 12 had military significance, but later "red 12" watches may not necessarily be of military origin.

Unlike trench art, "sweetheart jewelry" during World War I was refined and mass-produced. These mementos were sold commercially in military post exchanges or at retail stores, and were often shipped home from overseas. Mothers, sisters, wives, and girlfriends wore sweetheart jewelry to display their patriotism and show that they missed their beloved, who was fighting abroad. This type of memorabilia was constructed using a range of metals, both precious and non-precious. Sweetheart jewelry took on many forms, including lockets, pins, bracelets, and rings.

Unlike trench art, "sweetheart jewelry" during World War I was refined and mass-produced.

Mothers would wear In-Service brooches as an "insignia of honor," with

Elgin Trench Watch and Lath Guard, 1917
PHOTO: LRF ANTIQUE WATCHES

each blue star representing how many sons were fighting in the war; higher numbers of blue stars on In-Service pins are thus encountered far less frequently today. Gold stars indicated that one of their sons had died during battle. In 1917, the song "Over There" by the American songwriter George M. Cohan became a patriotic anthem in the United States. An excerpt of this ballad mentions the soldier's loved one: "Tell your sweetheart not to pine, To be proud her boy's in line...And we won't come back till it's over, over there." A red, white, and blue In-Service brass and enamel pin references this popular patriotic anthem on its enamel plaque. The back of the pin is stamped "PAT. PEND'G", which pinpoints a 1917 date of manufacture.

Another World War I brass and enamel In-Service Field Artillery brooch depicts one blue star above two intersecting cannons with "U.S." superimposed on them. The cannons represented the American Field Artillery regiment. In 1905, the U.S. War Department had revamped their crossed-cannons

In-Service Field Artillery Pin, ca 1916
PHOTO: FROSTED HOPE

"Good Bye Sweetheart" Postcard, ca 1916
PHOTO: ALYSSA KIRSTEN

As the destruction of World War I raged on, new forms of art and utility emerged to counter the devastation.

motif into this more realistic image to replace the older, more caricatured version. In-Service pins publicly advertised a family's personal contribution to the war effort.

World War I Berlin iron rings are best understood by examining their Prussian predecessors. During the Napoleonic wars, it became clear to military officials that Prussia lacked the weaponry to fend off the French. In 1813, the Prussian royal family requested that aristocratic women trade their expensive gold jewelry for low-priced iron pieces in order to raise money to support the insurgence against Napoleonic occupation. In exchange for their gold jewelry, women were given iron brooches and rings etched with sayings such as "*Gold gab ich für Eisen*" ("I gave gold for iron") and "Für das Wohl des Vaterlands" ("For the welfare of the Fatherland"). King Friedrich Wilhelm III also prohibited the use of all jewelry materials other than iron until the war ended. The financial support of German citizens helped lead the Prussians toward victory over the French.

The Prussian nationalistic tradition of giving up gold for iron was revived in Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1914. The money raised from these exchanges supported widows and orphans whose husbands and fathers had died in the war. A *New York Times* article from that year, titled "The Iron Ring is Worn By 10,000 New Yorkers," stated that Germans displayed their national devotion by relinquishing their gold for iron rings that "[bore] the old inscription." Both women and men swapped their precious keepsakes—wedding rings, musical instruments, and antiques—for iron rings with the engraving "*Gold gab ich für Eisen 1914.*" Nothing was turned away, even if the item had little or no value.

In 1917, Tiffany & Co. gemologist George Frederick Kunz wrote a book titled *Rings For The Finger: From The Earliest Known Times To The Present.* In this publication, he said that Berlin iron rings were "frequently lined with a thin layer of gold" in order to prevent one's finger from discoloring due to the iron oxidization. A rose gold–lined Berlin iron ring displays the popular motto with the initials "Ö.S.K." appended. Each letter of this particular ring is unique, since it was hand-engraved. The Ö.S.K. engraving stands for Österreichischen Silbernen Kreuzes, or Silver Cross of Austria, which suggests that it originated from the Austrian chapter of The Society of the Silver Cross. This association was known to take care of disabled reservists and their families, and also collected wedding rings for which it gave iron in exchange. Berlin iron rings were a visible and fashionable statement of German pride.

As the destruction of World War I raged on, new forms of art and utility emerged to counter the devastation. The more we learn about these works of historical and sentimental value, the better we are able to appreciate life during wartime and the memories and hopes that these objects preserve.

Kristie Rosen is a New York–based jewelry historian and designer.

Ber*lin Iron Ring* (2 views), 1914
iron, rose gold
PHOTO: ALYSSA KIRSTEN

Reviews

"Lauren Kalman: Coveted Objects"

Cranbrook Art Museum,
Bloomfield Hills, MI
September 13–October 19, 2014

by Renée C. Hoogland

Lauren Kalman's gilded adornments of (largely female) human bodies have been making the rounds in the art criticism world as "transgressive," "political," "feminist," "conceptual," and, in any case, "unusual." For female artists to use actual bodies (especially their own) to make political statements about gender, sexuality, and power, is, of course, neither new nor unusual. With luminary predecessors like Ana Mendieta, Hannah Wilke, Carolee Schneemann, Cindy Sherman, Francesca Woodman—the list goes on—who exploded their naked, transformed, violated, and transient bodies upon the art scene in the 1970s and 1980s, Kalman (b. 1980) finds herself in excellent yet no longer particularly transgressive company. What is, perhaps, unusual, is that Kalman combines photography, performance, installation, and video with the traditionally minor (for generally perceived as craft) art forms of metalsmithing and/or jewelry making.

This combination of practices has made for some quite remarkable work: Kalman's series "Blooms, Efflorescence, and Other Dermatological Embellishments" (2009) features photographs of a disturbing collection of (white, young, female) naked bodies adorned with the aestheticized manifestations of horrid diseases in the form of bejeweled gold acupuncture wires. There is a jarring quality to the beauty of these tiny colorful objects pierced into skin, evoking at once the grotesque deformations produced by deadly diseases like AIDS, cancer, and the less lethal yet equally disfiguring dermatological afflictions within contemporary body adornment such as piercings, tattoos, and "enfashionings": practices once associated with marginalized and lower-class groups but currently part of a broader consumer culture that celebrates and increasingly treats bodies themselves as commodities.

And yet: is this series of work a critique of the objectification of bodies in 21st-century consumer culture? I find myself on the fence. Much as I can applaud the apparent "politics" of this work—its emphatic attempt to challenge oppressive and degrading power-gendered and racialized, ageist, and classist socio-corporeal practices—I am inevitably drawn to the "horrible beauty," to the aesthetic smoothness, of these diseases-becoming-ornament upon the tight white skin of anonymous bodies where the pearls, gemstones, gold, and glass beads flourish.

Kalman's recent exhibition, "Coveted Objects," her first solo show in Michigan, would nonetheless appear to pursue a similar line of questioning—even if the press materials and artist's statements tend to emphasize the "conceptual" more than the "political" aspects of the work. The selection on view is part of the artist's larger project, *But if the Crime is Beautiful,* a title which references Adolf Loos's (in)famous lecture "Ornament and Crime" (1908). Loos's talk, from which he subsequently developed his radical aesthetic purism, is a rant against the over-ornamentation and degeneracy of Old World art and culture in opposition to the pure, modern, and progressive functionality of the New World,

"But if the Crime is Beautiful," installation at Cranbrook Museum of Art, 2014
inkjet prints, Swarovski pearls, gold-plated brass, faux gold leaf, fabric, plaster, paper maché, laser cut plywood, furniture, lighting stands, mixed media

Composition with Ornament and Object (18), 2014
inkjet print
20 x 16"

cast in the prevalent evolutionist discourse of his time.

"Coveted Objects" consists of a series of photographs that mostly (re)present a young naked white female body—headless, occasionally covered in gold paint—paired with quintessential mid-century modernist design objects: an Eames wire base table, his model plastic side chair, a stainless steel floor lamp. Within most photos the woman's face is covered by an oval gilded shape. In a corner of the gallery, we encounter the various props or objects represented in the photographs grouped together like a small orchestra. In addition to the furniture, there is a gold star-shaped form; a gilded rectangular music stand; two white three-dimensional collages; and the recurring gold-colored oval sheet.

In the exhibition notes, curator Laura Mott writes that Kalman "contends with Loos by enacting his crimes," and by disrupting a "male-centric ideology concerned with symmetry and function." Far less disturbing than the elaborate and invasive beautification of appalling (skin) diseases on actual flesh, the female bodies in these photographs appear to follow the simplicity of the unembellished and unadorned modernist design of the mid-century props to the letter. As such, the works do not so much seem to question as to embrace a purist aesthetic that, precisely because of its linearity and simplicity, proves itself much more open to pleasing, decorative reconfiguration than to critical intervention. Yes, mid-century modern design has been critiqued for its elitism, its function as status symbol, its patriarchal lineage. Kalman's gilded, faceless female bodies smoothly blend in with such functionality: there is no jar, no clash, no disturbance of the clean lines of the props by the grafted-on human-shaped objects. If there is anything surprising about this work, it is that gilded ornaments and large animate and inanimate objects work so well within the established standard of "superior" taste.

There is one piece, however, that poignantly brings home the violence of the objectification of the female body. This work also appears farthest removed from the modernist aesthetic and instead refers to a pre-modern (or, alternatively, postmodern) style of female body modification and restraint: a life-sized, white, frilly bodice hanging on the wall, at a distance from both the assembled props and the photographs. To me, this suggests that a distinct and relentless stylization of a particular (white, straight, middle-class) femininity is ultimately much more oppressive and degrading than the symmetry and clarity of modernist functionality.

Renée C. Hoogland is Professor of English at Wayne State University in Detroit. Her most recent book is A Violent Embrace: Art and Aesthetics after Representation *(UPNE, 2014).*

"Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age"

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
September 22, 2014–January 4, 2015

by Rosanne Raab

Everything one would want to know about metalsmithing throughout the Aegean Bronze Age can be discovered in "Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age," on view recently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The scholarly exhibition was organized under the aegis of Joan Aruz, curator of the Near Eastern Art Department, in concert with colleagues at major museums around the world. It is a narrative that journeys from trading posts and colonies, along a thousand-mile route that extended from the northern coast of Africa to present-day Syria and northern Iraq. More than 250 objects document the meaningful role played by enterprising seafarers who transported goods as far west as Great Britain. Cargo included ritual objects and body ornaments of gold and silver that glorified rich and powerful leaders, bronze armor and weaponry, and minted coins that facilitated trade.

"Assyria to Iberia" introduces the art of metalsmithing at the end of the Bronze Age (12th-11th century BC), when smelting copper and alloying with tin, or trading for bronze, flourished. *Wheeled Vessel Stand* (1250-1100 BC), a small-scale bronze for wine or water fabricated in Cyprus, transcends functionality when viewed as a miniature theatrical stage: lions on the attack; dolphins, waterbirds, and fish frolicking below the surface; and an aggressive hunter with

Necklace from the *Carambolo Treasure*, 7th century B.C.
gold
El Carambolo (Camas, Seville)
COURTESY MUSEO ARQUEOLÓGICO DE SEVILLA PHOTO: BRUCE WHITE

Helmet, 8th century B.C.
bronze
Karmir Blur
COURTESY HISTORY MUSEUM OF ARMENIA
PHOTO: ARMEN GHAZARYAN

a quiver in pursuit of prey. Two robed figures playing large lyres indicate its intended use at a convivial occasion. Its functionality is evident but its distinction is achieved in its narrative virtuosity.

Phoenician civilization, dating from the Iron Age (800 BC), served as a cultural link from the time of Assyria's decline and Babylon's rise. The Phoenicians operated Mediterranean shipping fleets that carried raw materials—gold, silver, tin, and copper—that were transformed into luxury goods by artisans in coastal towns, e.g. Tharros, Sardinia. Repousse, chasing, and granulation were applied to designs dominated by Egyptian motifs such as the *Gold Bracelet* (7th-6th century BC) in which a falcon head in profile is embraced by four beetle wings. Silver-gilded shallow vessels (9th-7th century BC), have surfaced at various sites from southwestern Iran to Italy, and typify examples of traditional gift-giving; ransoms perhaps, or prizes for athletic competitions. *Bowl with Egyptianizing Motifs* (late 8th-early 7th century BC) depicts an Assyrian winged figure attacking a raging lion. *Bowl with Star Pattern* (7th century BC) is bordered by a band of lotus-flower decoration set between cable-pattern (guilloche) borders that further demonstrate the storytelling legends interpreted by Phoenician metalsmiths.

Bowl with Egyptianizing Motifs, 8th-7th century B.C.
gilded silver
MUSEO NAZIONALE ETRUSCO DI VILLA GIULIA, ROME
PHOTO: BRUCE WHITE

Bronze cauldrons, with decorative animal-shaped attachments (protomes), were deposited in burials at Urartu, Phrygia, Cyprus, and Etruria. *Cauldron with Lion Attachments* was discovered in the Regolini-Galassi tomb at Praeneste (675-650 BC). It portrays frontal views of five animal heads with prominent teeth, prototypes established in the Anatolian highlands and in Armenia as tributes to Assyrian Kings in the East, and marketed as luxury goods valued for ceremonial importance in the West.

The dazzling *Carambolo Treasure* is an ensemble comprising a necklace, two bracelets, sixteen rectangular plaques, and two plaques in the shape of ox hides. It was discovered in 1958 near Seville, Spain and dates from the 7th century BC. The trove supports the existence of a city governed by a royal dynasty with mythical ancestors. A priest would have worn the chunky gold bracelets, sheathed in alternating rows of round and cup-like gold balls; the necklace is composed of seven hanging seal-like ornaments, each encrusted with filigree wire soldered onto the base plate. Thus bejeweled, the priest would have performed a ritual that comprised sacrificial animals adorned with gold ornaments and decorative fabrics.

An 8th-century BC conical bronze helmet and a battered shield and a quiver, are skillfully incised to form reliefs that depict riders and chariots, bulls and lions. They manifest evidence that ancient civilizations witnessed the rise and fall of empires and the destruction of their cultural heritage. "Assyria to Iberia" is a reminder that museums are guardians of the world's treasures and we are the benefactors.

Rosanne Raab is a curator and writer specializing in craft and design.

"Eunmi Chun: Flora & Fauna"

Ornamentum Gallery,
Hudson, NY
September 20–
October 19, 2014

by Andrea DiNoto

How disturbing is it that "cow intestine" is listed as the primary material in the 13 works created for this exhibition by the Korean artist Eunmi Chun? Not very, it turns out, because the organic material is unrecognizable as such. It has been processed into thin sheet, much like ancient parchment (goatskin) and vellum (calfskin), and also, possibly, into a moldable, waxlike resin. Additionally, captions indicate the use of pigskin, human hair, seeds, silver, and zinc-plated steel, but the metals are used mainly as invisible support for the organic substances. Amber-colored and translucent, the animal tissue retains no hint of its ghastly slaughterhouse origins, but for Chun the use of gut is a radical conceptual act intended to demonstrate how something nominally repugnant can be transformed into beautiful, if strangely beautiful, objects.

Chun has fashioned ten neckpieces and three brooches, each of which features a tiny animal head mounted on a flat metal back, which in turn is decorated with Matisse-like cutouts of stylized plant forms. The resultant creations resemble nothing so much as miniaturized mounted trophies of wild animals, the kind of thing that might decorate a dollhouse-sized hunting lodge. Peering from the flora are bears, rhinos, gorillas, and lions, as well as the more peaceable horse and giraffe; avian creatures are accounted for in the form of peacock and eagle. For purpose of comparison, the

Rhinoceros Pendant, 2014
cow gut, pigskin, silver, steel
7 x 4 ¾ x 4"

Giraffe Brooch, 2013
cow gut, pigskin, human hair, seeds, silver, steel
6 x 4 ¾ x 2 ¾"

gallery included two pieces from Chun's earlier three-dimensional work, notably a four-legged, hollow-form bear brooch constructed cubist-style from rectangular pieces of processed animal gut secured—literally sewn together—with shimmering strands of the artist's own hair that had been gold plated. A similar brooch, a gorilla, is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Chun has stated that the use of animal tissue, beyond its transformative potential, is central to her over-riding theme: the cycle of life. In this regard, her three-dimensional animals succeed as astonishing totemic creatures called into being from necrotic tissue; but in the case of this new body of work, the severed animal heads remain static, frozen in the trophy form, which suggest memento mori. Still, the heads, which appear to have been sculpted and cast in a mold, draw you in with their uncanny translucence: Might they be glowing with life? These are generalized, benign forms that suggest essences emanating from, or even melting into, plant imagery, as if to confirm an interconnectedness within the natural world.

In an online interview published by Art Jewelry Forum, Chun, a Munich-based former student of Otto Kunzli's, explained that her choice of materials grew out of pondering the nature of beauty in jewelry. "Then I asked myself," she said, "how I could pursue this beauty. I decided on working with disgusting or rejected materials, believing that something repulsive, given the right context, could be beautiful." If there is a flaw in her thinking, it's only that without benefit of captions the viewer has no clue as to "something repulsive" being at hand; and even as we contemplate "cow gut," and "pigskin" in the materials list, we are reminded that the use of organic materials has a long tradition in jewelry and the decorative arts. (And of course sheep and pig intestines are widely used as sausage and hot-dog casings, something we don't like to think about either, perhaps.) Today we're not all that shocked to find human hair, bone, antler, teeth, insects and even whole animals—taxidermied and otherwise—presented to us in contemporary jewelry, often to transcendent visual effect. However, gut speaks of biological processes, filth, and mortality, and it is the latter condition that is most evident in Chun's severed heads gazing poignantly into the abyss. Curiously, where the animals appear almost ghostlike in their simplicity, the displays of arranged flora are highly developed and multilayered—some shaped into volumetric forms that overwhelm the heads with their fascinating yet puzzling elaboration. In a few pieces, Chun again uses strands of her own hair, tipped in gold, to mimic pollen-bearing stamens. Again, we might perceive these strands as anything—thread, wire or such—if unaware of their source. Perhaps the beauty Chun achieves in these and earlier pieces derives from just such a personal commitment involving the revelation of beauty in the utterly banal and a desire to celebrate nature on a purely primal—some might say gut—level.

Andrea DiNoto is a writer on art, craft and design.

"Betsy Douglas, Metal and Beyond: A Lifework of Creativity"

Mesa Arts Center, Mesa, AZ
May 9–August 10, 2014

by Josh Chuzi

Before I visited her exhibition at the Mesa Arts Center, I had never heard of Betsy Douglas. All I had managed to glean from the few tidbits about her online was that her work appeared contemporary and well executed, but also a lot like the stuff my Mom used to bring home from craft shows and street fairs. Therefore, I was surprised to find at the exhibition the physical manifestations of an artisan purely committed to combining expert craftsmanship with a fascination for integrating unusual materials and multidisciplinary influences. Douglas has spent nearly 50 years steadfastly devoted to experimentation and play within design. "Metal and Beyond: A Lifework of Creativity" offers a snapshot of what is surely an epic landscape of tireless toiling. Although the show jumps around, it is easy to see that Douglas's work moves well beyond jewelry, more into the realm of what I would consider modern figurative sculpture, living somewhere between the monoliths of Richard Serra and the delicates of Michael Good.

With an eclectic background in graphic arts, greeting card illustration and theater set design, it is understandable that Douglas's metal works should show influences from a wide variety of time periods and cultures. From Art Deco to biomorphism and Central American and African tribal forms, to science fiction and the postmodern,

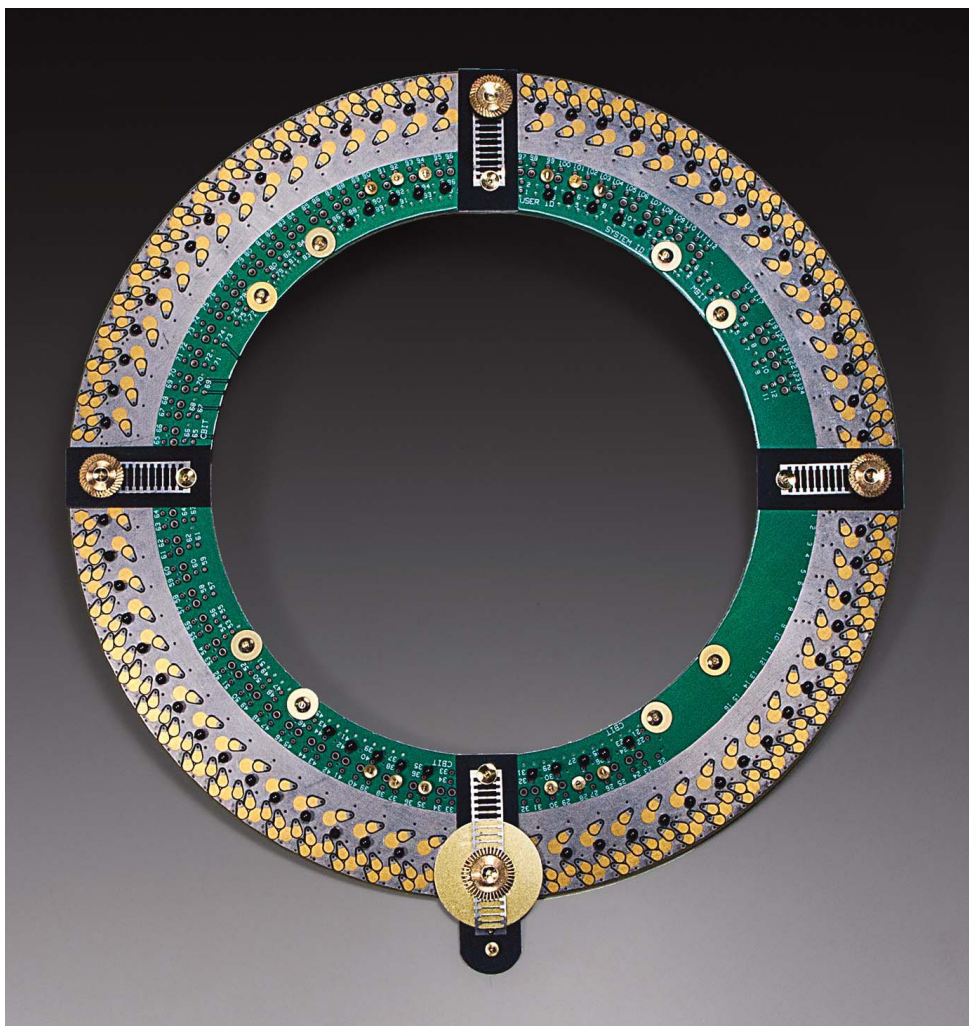
Douglas does not shy away from dabbling with the diverse textures and patterns that capture her interest. One of my favorite pieces in the show, *Passion Cup* (1979), made from dix gold and sterling silver, has the rounded, simplified forms reminiscent of a Brancusi bust. Hi-tech Maasai Collar (2014), on the other hand, combines rubber and mechanized circuit boards to lend a space-age twist to the intricate patterns of traditional African adornment.

I found myself most attracted, overall, to Douglas's functional pieces. The effortless, uncomplicated style in works like *Bill's Omelet Pans* (1981), *Celebration Cups* (1989) and *Lady Candle Holders* (1984), paired with Douglas's impeccable craftsmanship, make them her most resolved works on display. Their thoughtful blending of fine materials with simple concepts is straight out of the Arts and Crafts movement, and its concern for the unifying forces of function and beauty. There is a warmth and a nostalgic quality exuding from the familiar shapes and titles, referencing family, ritual and the human body.

Conversely, though works like *Wing Brooch* (1991), *Flair Necklace* (1996) and *Blossom Necklace* (1996) still illustrate the artist's meticulous care in forming and shaping, the regularity of their complicatedly folded metal, for me, struggles to transcend its sheeted origins. Although Douglas sees her work as challenging people's perceptions of what materials should feel like, stating, "I wanted metal to appear soft, not hard," I found her jewelry pieces to lack the contrast that would allow them to break past their heavy, static silhouettes. The beautiful materials and textural mark making present within the pieces, however, contribute to an elegance and balance that could only be created by someone with a well-refined eye.

Passion Cup, 1979
dix gold, sterling silver
9 ¾ x 3 ¼ x 3"

Hi-Tech Maasai Collar, 2014
circuit board, aluminum, nickel lead frames, brass, onyx beads
12 ¾ x 11 ¾ x ⅝"



Douglas's most recent evolution seems to be moving further away from metalworking, and more towards incorporating alternative materials like gears, rubber, and circuitry. Although I have now come to respect her lifelong propensity for experimentation and play, I am concerned that *Bi-Metal Pectoral Collar* (2008), *Binary Breastplate* (2010) and the other inflexibly tech-based departures in this series are missing the whimsy and charm that have given her works soul. If it's the future Betsy Douglas is looking for, I would much prefer to see her find it within the beautiful character and craftsmanship of her works from the past.

Josh Chuzi, a university instructor and figurative sculptor, is earning his Ph.D. at Arizona State University, examining the history, theory and criticism linked to collaboration-based design.

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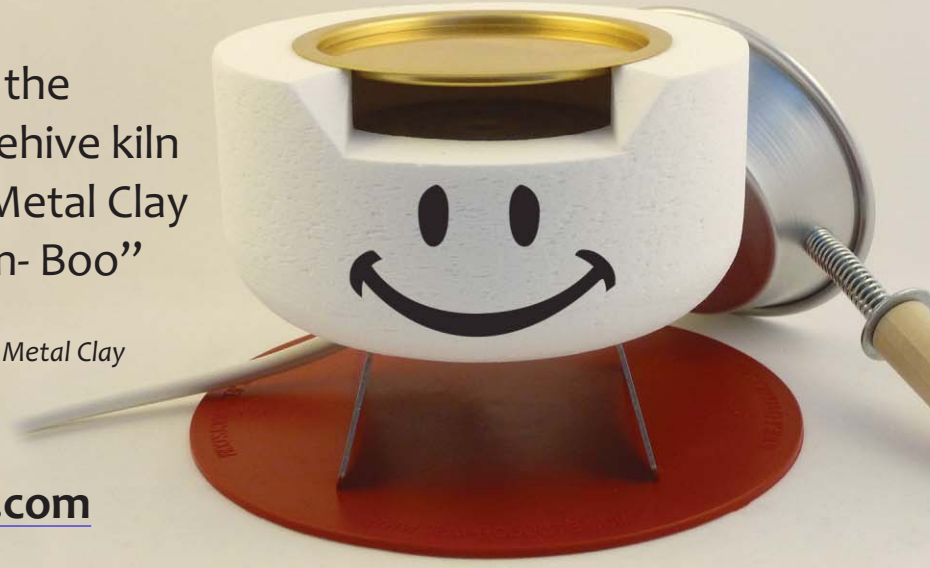

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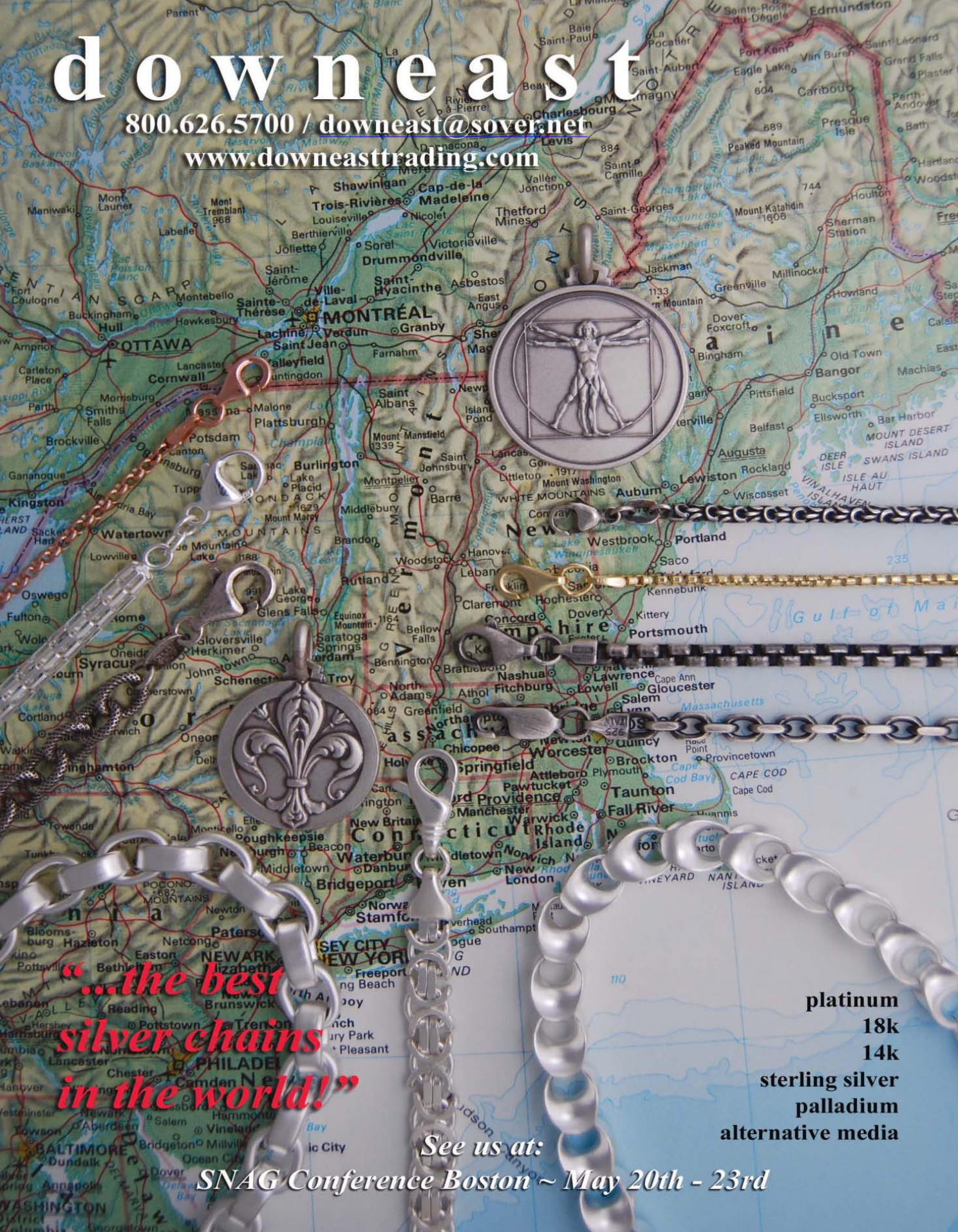

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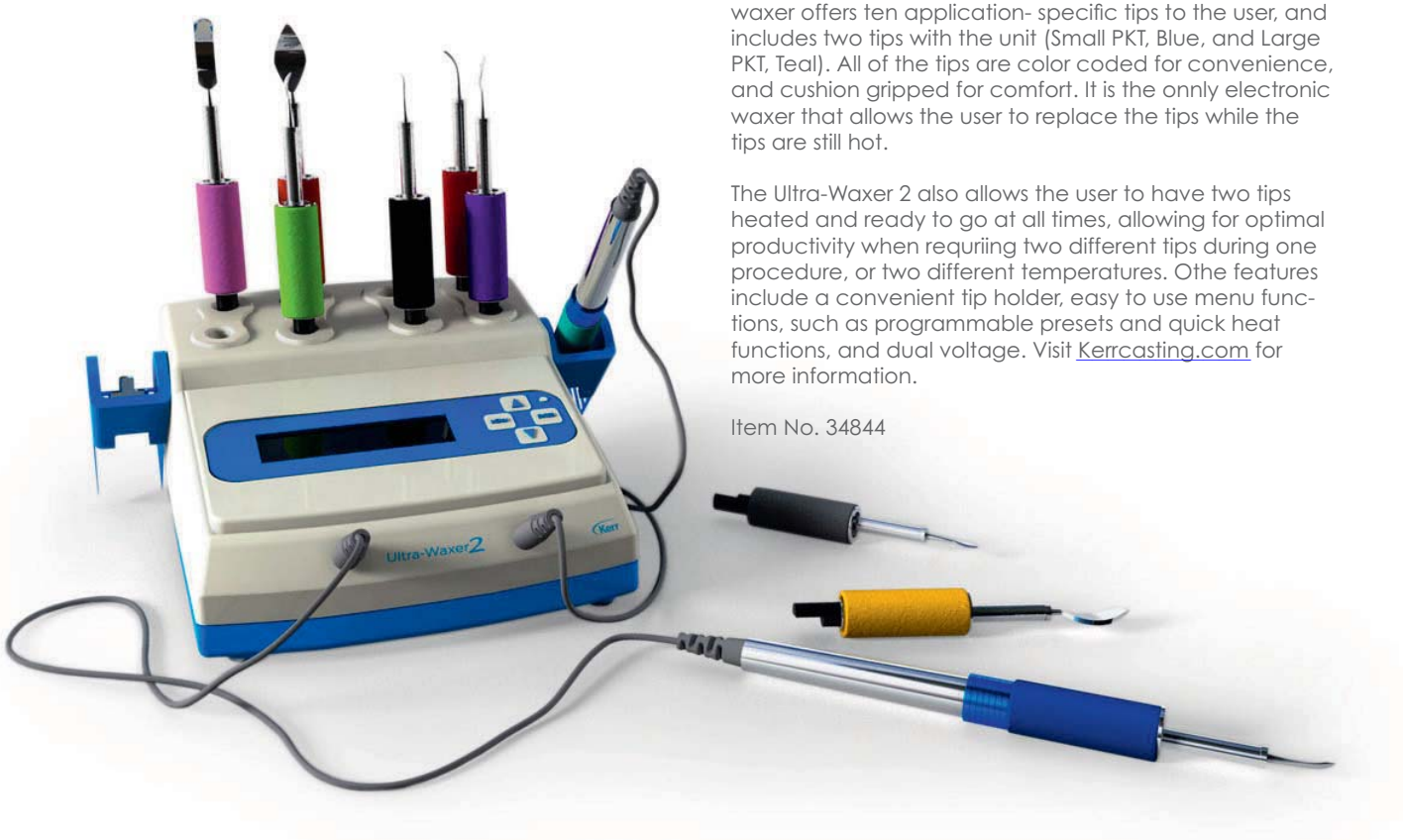

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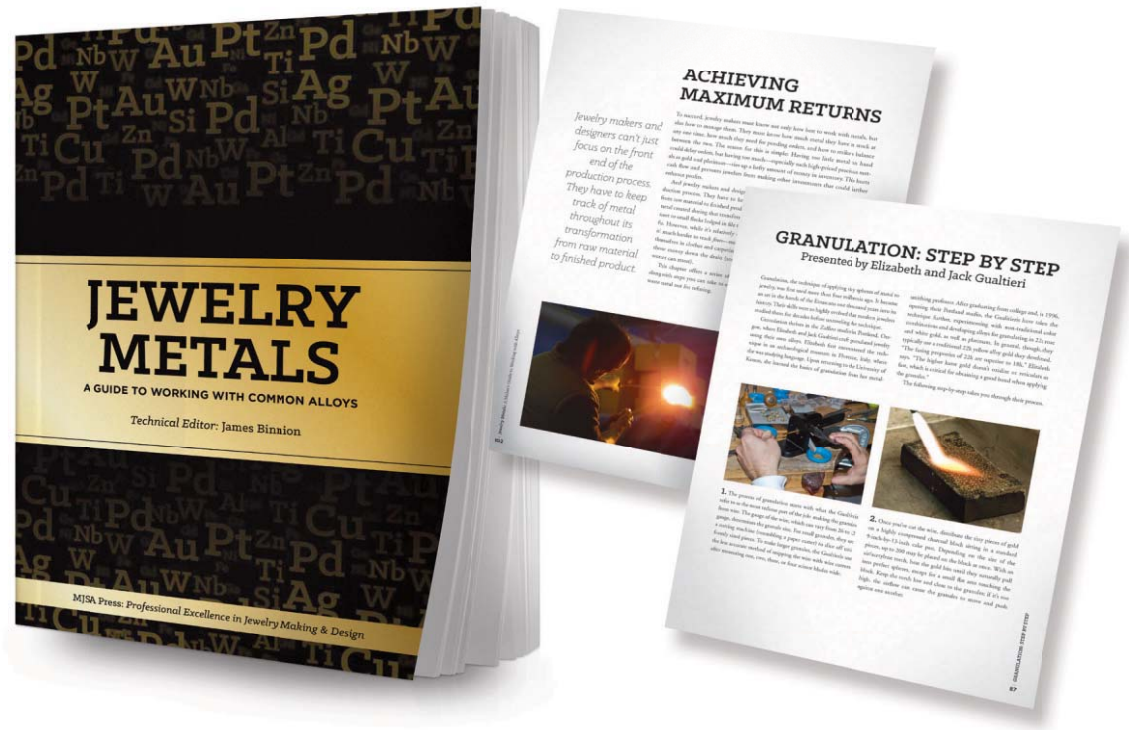
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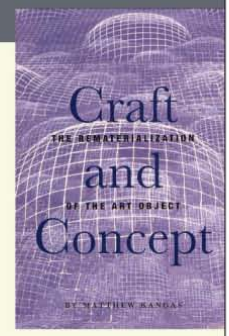

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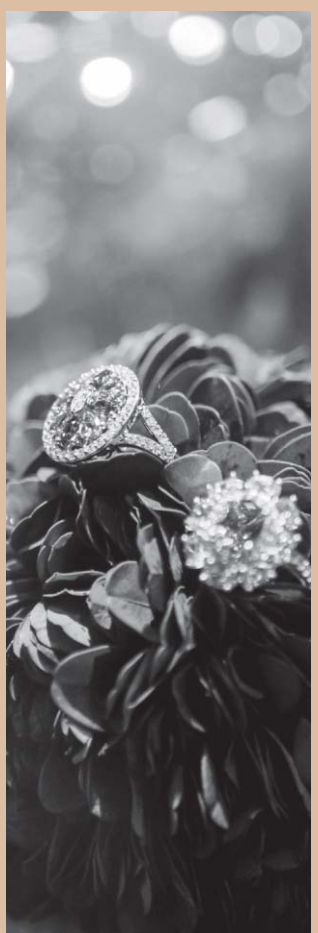

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